TRAVELS

OF A

PHILOSOPHER:

OR,

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MANNERS AND ARTS

OF

VARIOUS NATIONS

IN

AFRICA AND ASIA.

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH OF M. LE POIVRE, LATE ENVOY TO THE KING OF COCHIN-CHINA, AND NOW INTENDANT OF THE ISLES OF BOURBON AND MAURITIUS.

DUBLIN:

Printed for P. and W. WILSON, J. EXSHAW, H. SAUNDERS, W. SLEATER, B. GRIERSON, D. CHAMBERLAINE, J. HOEY, jun. and J. WILLIAMS, M DCC LXX.

ADVERTISEMENT.

LES VOYAGES D'UN PHILOSOPHE of M. le Poivre have been much admired in France. They were originally read in 1764 and 1765, before the Royal Society of Agriculture at Lyons, of which he was then preſident, and afterwards before the Royal Society of Paris in 1766. For ſome time they were handed about in manuſcript, and at length, in 1768, found their way to the preſs.

M. le Poivre's manner is eaſy and elegant; his obſervations ſtriking and judicious; his ſentiments philanthropical and benevolent.—The genuine happineſs of every nation muſt depend on agriculture, and agriculture muſt ever be influenced by eſtabliſhed laws and modes of government: nature indulgently ſmiles on the labour of a free-born people, but ſhrinks with horror from the tyrant and the ſlave. This is his ſyſtem, and it is the ſyſtem of truth founded on experience, and ſupported not only by

by comparing cotemporary nations, but by contraſting nations with themſelves at different periods.

It is neceſſary the reader ſhould keep in view the country of the author, as many of his ſtrictures on European agriculture, though unapplicable perhaps to Britain, convey a deſcriptive Picture of the ſtate of cultivation in France.

Originals generally ſuffer by tranſlation: this obſervation perhaps, with too great juſtice, may

may be applied to the preſent attempt. As a gentleman, however, will be diſtinguiſhed in any garb, it is hoped M. le Poivre's intrinſic merit will procure him a polite reception, whatever impropriety or inelegance may be found in his preſent dreſs.

CON-

CONTENTS.

Introduction — — Page 1
The weſtern Coaſt of Africa — 6
The Cape of Good Hope — 9
Madagaſcar — — 20
Iſle of Bourbon — — 27
Iſle of France — — 30
Coaſt of Coromandel — — 36
Machine for watering rice-grounds — — 40
Mode of labour — — 42
Flocks of ſheep, &c. — 43
Gardens — — 45
The Cocoa-tree — — 46
The kingdom of Siam —— 51
The Malais — — 64
Sagou — — — 74

PART SECOND.

Power of agriculture — Origin of the kingdom of Ponthiamas — 90

Camboya

Camboya and Tſiampa —— 98
Cochin-china — — 100
Culture of different kinds of rice in Cochin-china —— 103
Sugar-canes — — 110
China — — — 137
Ceremony of opening the grounds 162
Encouragements of agriculture 166
Attention of the Chineſe government — — 168
The impoſts eſtabliſhed in China invariable — — 170
The impoſt called the tenth 171
Compariſon of the agriculture of Africa and Aſia with that of China —— — 174
The ſtate of agriculture in Europe 176
in Africa 177
in America 178
in Aſia 179

TRA-

TRAVELS

OF A

PHILOSOPHER.

EVERY people, however barbarous, have arts peculiar to themſelves. The diverſity of climates, whilſt it varies the wants of mankind, offers to their induſtry different productions on which to exerciſe it. Every country, at a certain degree of diſtance, has fabrics ſo ſingularly peculiar to itſelf, that they could not have been the fabrics of other regions: but agriculture, in every climate, is the univerſal art of mankind: from one extreme of the globe to the other, nations ſtill barbarous, as well as thoſe whoſe ideas are civilized, procure to them-

ſelves, at leaſt, a part of their ſubſiſtence by the culture of their fields; yet this art, however univerſal, is not every where equally flouriſhing.

It never fails to proſper among wiſe nations, who know how to honour and encourage it;—it ſupports itſelf but feebly amongſt a people half poliſhed, who either prefer to it frivolous arts, or who, being ſufficiently enlightened perhaps to perceive its utility, are ſtill too much ſlaves to the prejudices of their ancient barbarity, to affranchize and confer honours on thoſe who exerciſe it;—it languiſhes, and its influence is ſcarcely to be obſerved amongſt barbarians, who deſpiſe it.

The ſtate of agriculture has ever been the principal object of my reſearches

ſearches among the various people I have ſeen in the courſe of my voyages. It is almoſt impoſſible for a traveller, who perhaps only paſſes through a country, to make ſuch remarks as are neceſſary to convey a juſt idea of the government, police, and manners of the inhabitants. In ſuch a caſe, the criterion which beſt marks the internal ſtate of a nation, is to obſerve the public markets, and the face of the country. If the markets abound in proviſions, if the fields are well cultivated, and covered with rich crops, then in general you may conclude that the country is well peopled, that the inhabitants are civilized and happy, that their manners are poliſhed, and their government agreeable to the principles of reaſon.—You may then ſay to yourſelf, I am amongſt *Men*.

When, on the contrary, I have arrived amongſt a people, whom it was neceſſary to ſearch for amidſt foreſts, whoſe neglected lands were overgrown with brambles; when I have traverſed large tracts of uncultivated deſarts, and then at laſt ſtumbled on a grubb'd-up wretchedly cultivated field; when arrived at length at ſome canton, I have obſerved nothing in the public market but a few ſorry roots; I no longer heſitated to determine the inhabitants to be wretched ſavages, or groaning under the moſt oppreſſive ſlavery.

I never remember a ſingle inſtance of being obliged to retract this firſt idea, conceived ſimply by inſpecting the ſtate of agriculture amongſt the various nations I have ſeen: the knowledge

ledge of various particulars, which a long reſidence amongſt many of them has enabled me to acquire, has ever confirmed me in opinion, that a country poorly cultivated is always inhabited by men barbarous or oppreſſed, and that population there can never be conſiderable.

You will obſerve by the detail I now offer you of my enquiries, that in every country agriculture depends abſolutely on the laws, the manners and even on the eſtabliſhed prejudices of the reſpective inhabitants. I ſhall begin with obſervations on ſome parts of Africa.

THE WESTERN COASTS OF AFRICA.

The iſlands and weſtern diſtricts of this part of the world which I have ſeen, are for the greater part uncultivated lands, inhabited by unhappy negroes. Theſe wretched men, who have ſo poor an eſtimation of themſelves as to ſell one another, never employ a thought on the cultivation of their lands. Satisfied to exiſt from day to day, under a climate where their wants are few, they cultivate juſt as much as prevents their dying of hunger; they careleſsly ſow every year ſome maize, a very little rice, and plant in ſmall quantities, different kinds of potatoes, not of the nature of ours, though the culture is much the ſame; we know them

them by the name of *yams*. In general their harveſts are ſo poor, that the Europeans, who reſort to them for the purchaſe of ſlaves, are obliged to bring from Europe or America the proviſions neceſſary for the maintenance of thoſe unfortunate creatures doomed to compoſe their cargoes.

The negroes who inhabit the environs of the European colonies, give ſomewhat more attention to agriculture than the others. — They rear flocks; they cultivate rice in greater quantities; and in their gardens are found pulſe, of which the ſeed has been brought from Europe; yet all they know of agriculture, they have learnt from the Europeans ſettled amongſt them; their own experience is extremely bounded; and I have never been able to diſcover in their

induſtry any proceſs which could in the leaſt improve our own.

From the river of Angola to Cape Negroe, and from thence till you approach the Cape of Good Hope, nothing is to be ſeen but ſterile uncultivated lands; the coaſts are naked, and covered with barren ſands; and you are under the neceſſity of travelling many leagues before you can diſcover a palm-tree, or the ſlighteſt verdure. The country and its few inhabitants ſeem to be ſtruck with one common curſe. From the informations I have received touching theſe countries from the Italian miſſionaries, who with an admirable zeal have penetrated into the heart of theſe accurſed regions, I learn likewiſe that agriculture is juſt as languid in the interior parts as upon the

the coaſts, although, in many places, the ſoil appeared much more fruitful from its natural productions.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

The countries around the Cape were condemned to the ſame ſterility before the Dutch took poſſeſſion of them; but ſince their eſtabliſhment on this point of Africa, the lands produce in abundance wheat and grain of every kind, wines of different qualities, and a conſiderable quantity of excellent fruits, collected from every quarter of the world. There you ſee extenſive paſtures covered with horſes, black cattle, and ſheep—theſe herds and flocks thrive exceedingly well. The abundance which this colony enjoys, compared to the barrenneſs of the ſurrounding countries, evi-

dently demonſtrates that the earth denies her favours only to the tyrant and the ſlave; but becomes prodigal of her treaſures, beyond the moſt ſanguine hope ſo ſoon as ſhe is free, and cultivated by men of diſcernment, whom wiſe and invariable laws protect.

A number of Frenchmen, forced from their country by the revocation of the edict of Nantz, have on this coaſt found a new eſtabliſhment, and with it, ſecurity, property, and liberty, the only true encouragers of agriculture, the only principles of abundance. They have enriched this adopted mother by their induſtry; they have there founded conſiderable colonies, ſome of which bear the name of that unhappy country which denied them the uſe of water and of fire,

fire, the remembrance of which however they ſtill fondly cheriſh.

The colony of Little Rochelle ſurpaſſes all the reſt, by the induſtry of the coloniſts, and the fertility of the lands which belong to it. The paſtures are there compoſed of a variety of graſſes, natives of the country, together with ſeveral different ſpecies of herbage, which compoſe our artificial meadows in Europe, ſuch as trefoil, lucerne, and ſaintfoin. The exotic plants, the ſeeds of which have been imported by the Dutch, flouriſh there as the natural productions of the country. Thoſe ſeeds are ſown by an operation of the plough; they cut the graſs only the firſt year; the ſecond they open the meadows to cattle, which live there at diſcretion, without any other attention than that of collecting

lecting them together every evening into a park incloſed with ſtrong and high palliſadoes, to ſecure them againſt the lions and tigers, with which this country abounds.

Some of theſe encloſures are watered only by the rains, although they generally endeavour to chooſe them in the neighbourhood of ſome brook, where they dig commodious watering places. In all theſe paſturages, they have an eye to groves of trees, where the herds and flocks may find ſhelter againſt the intenſe heat of the ſun; particularly in January, February, and March, which in this part of the world are the moſt ſultry months in the year.

The arable land is here laboured as in Europe, ſometimes by horſes, but

but oftener by oxen: the Dutch of this colony have by their induſtry corrected the natural ſluggiſhneſs of theſe latter animals, by exerciſing them while young in a briſk pace; in conſequence of which I have ſeen, at the Cape, carriages, drawn by teams of ten or a dozen yoke of oxen, go as expeditiouſly as if drawn by horſes.

The grains commonly ſown at the Cape, are wheat, turkey corn, and rice; theſe generally produce an increaſe of fifty-fold. They cultivate a variety of different kinds of pulſe, ſuch as peaſe, common beans, and French beans. This pulſe makes a refreſhing proviſion to the ſhips touching at the Cape going or returning to India.

A particular ſpecies of this pulſe is much in requeſt in India, to which they

they export a conſiderable quantity: it is there known by the name of *Cape Peaſe:* it is a kind of French bean which requires no prop; its grain is of the form of that bean, but larger and flatter; it taſtes like our green peaſe, and preſerves its freſhneſs for a long time. I have this year attempted the culture of this plant, which promiſes ſucceſs. The climate at the Cape ſeems to demand from the cultivator an attention which appears not ſo neceſſary in this country, and which would even perhaps be prejudicial to the productions of our lands.

The Cape however is expoſed the greateſt part of the year to violent hurricanes, which blow generally from the north-eaſt. Theſe winds are ſo impetuous that they would beat

beat down the fruits from the trees, and ſweep to deſtruction the labours of the farmer, had they not provided a barrier for the ſecurity of the harveſt. The Dutch coloniſts have divided their lands into ſmall fields, which they have ſurrounded with high palliſades of oaks and other trees, planted very cloſe to one another, ſomewhat reſembling a charmille, deſigned for the ornament of a garden. Theſe palliſades they cut every year, as they grow; their heighth being commonly from twenty-five to thirty feet; every ſeparate field, in conſequence, is encloſed like a chamber.

It is by this induſtry alone that the Dutch have rendered this colony not only the granary of all their ſettlements in the Eaſt-Indies, but the

moſt

moſt commodious place for veſſels to touch at for refreſhments and proviſions of all kinds.

When the dutch began to form their vineyards, they endeavoured to procure plants from thoſe cantons which enjoyed the greateſt reputation for their vines; but after many fruitleſs attempts to produce, at the extremity of Africa, the wines of Burgundy and Champagne, they applied to rearing the plants tranſported from Spain, the Canaries, and the Levant, where the climate is more analagous to the Cape. At preſent the plants which are cultivated moſt ſucceſsfully, are thoſe of the Muſcadel kind: the red Muſcadel particularly, which they rear in a ſmall diſtrict called Conſtance, produces moſt delicious wine; the Dutch Eaſt-India Company

Company always ſecure this vintage, which they ſend in preſents to the ſovereigns of Europe.

The wines at the Cape are cultivated without vine-props; the method of labour is much the ſame with that in France. The vineyards are ſurrounded by a number of trees, upon which they entwine the ſlips of the great Spaniſh Muſcadine, in form of eſpaliers, very high, by which the vines are ſheltered from the violence of the winds.

The ſame attention, at the Cape, is paid to gardening, as to the other branches of agriculture. You there find all the variety of European pulſe, greens, herbs, and roots, with the beſt of thoſe peculiar to other parts of the world. Independent of the gardens

gardens of the coloniſts, which are kept in as fine order as any in Europe, the India Company have cauſed to be laid out two or three gardens, extenſive and magnificent, which they ſupport with an expence worthy of a ſovereign company.

Fifteen or twenty European gardeners, whoſe abilities are approved before they are embarked, are employed in the cultivation of each of thoſe vaſt gardens, under the direction of a principal gardener, whoſe place is lucrative and honourable. It is in thoſe gardens, at the expence of the company, that all the experiments are made in every new ſpecies of culture; and it is there that every private individual is provided, gratis, with ſuch plants and ſeeds as he may have occaſion for, together with the neceſ-

neceſſary inſtructions for their cultivation. Theſe gardens furniſh, in the greateſt abundance, herbage and fruits of various kinds to the company's ſhips.

Travellers cannot but with pleaſure and admiration obſerve large encloſures conſecrated to the ſtudy and improvement of botany, in which the moſt rare and uſeful plants, from every quarter of the world, are arranged in the moſt excellent order: the curious have the additional ſatiſfaction alſo of finding ſkilful gardeners, who take pleaſure in deſcribing and pointing out their virtues.

Thoſe beautiful gardens are terminated by large orchards, where are to be found all the fruits of Europe, together with ſeveral natives of Africa

Africa and Aſia. Nothing is more agreeable than to ſee in different expoſitions, even in the ſame encloſure, the cheſnut, the apple, and other trees, from the moſt northern climates, together with the muſcadine of the Indies, the camphres of Borneo, the palms, and a variety of other trees, which are natives of the torrid zone.

MADAGASCAR.

After doubling the Cape of Good Hope, you enter the Indian ſea, where you find the great iſland of Madagaſcar: we are ſtill unacquainted with many places of this iſland, though the Portugueſe, Dutch, French, and other Europeans have had ſettlements, and frequented it above two centuries. Thoſe parts, which

which we know, are very fertile, and the inhabitants would, in all probability, cultivate them extremely well, were there a vent for their productions. They rear numerous herds of cattle and ſheep ; their paſturages, ſuch as nature has formed them, are rich : in many cantons are large tracts of tilled ground, covered with graſs of an extraordinary ſize, which grows to the height of five or ſix feet ; the natives call it *Fatak* ; it is excellent for nouriſhing and fattening their horned cattle, which are of the largeſt ſpecies, and differ in ſhape from ours, particularly by a large fleſhy protuberance on their neck. — Another graſs, of a finer blade, ſhoots ſpontaneouſly through the ſands on the ſea coaſt, which furniſhes food for the ſheep : theſe are of the ſame ſpecies with thoſe of Barbary, and differ from

from ours moſt remarkably, by the monſtrous ſize of their tails, which weigh in general from ſix to eight pounds.

The Madecaſſes or Malegaches (which is the name of the inhabitants of this iſland) cultivate ſcarce any other grain but rice: they ſow at the commencement of the rainy ſeaſon; in conſequence of which they are not under the neceſſity of watering their fields. In labouring their ground, they uſe no other inſtrument but the pick-axe; they begin by grubbing up all the weeds; then five or ſix men, ranging themſelves in a line on the field, dig little holes as they paſs along, into which the women or children, who follow, throw the grains of the rice, and then with their feet cover them with earth: a field

field ſown in this manner, produces an increaſe of above eighty or a hundred-fold, which proves rather the extreme fertility of the ſoil, than the goodneſs of the cultivation: badly underſtood as it may be, however, the inhabitants of Madegaſcar live in abundance. In no country in the world, that I have ſeen, are rice and other eſſential proviſions cheaper than in this iſland. For a remnant of coarſe blue cloth, which may be worth perhaps twenty pence, the Madecaſſe gives two or three meaſures of rice. Theſe meaſures are furniſhed by the Europeans, who never fail to enlarge them every year; yet the iſlanders do not complain. The meaſure is firſt of all heaped; the buyer then, in virtue of an eſtabliſhed right for ſecuring good meaſure, thruſts his arm to the elbow in the rice,

rice, and with one ſweep empties it almoſt entirely, which the Madecaſſe has the patience a ſecond time to repleniſh, without a murmur. This meaſure is called a *Gamelle*, which, thus filled, will hold about 160 pounds of pure rice.

There cannot be a doubt, but if our [the French] India Company, who alone are in poſſeſſion of the trade with the natives of this iſland, would give proper encouragement to agriculture, it would in a ſhort time make a rapid progreſs.—Our iſlands of Bourbon and France would here always find a certain reſource againſt thoſe dearths which too frequently diſtreſs the latter of theſe iſlands. Our ſquadrons bound for India, who put into the Iſle of France for refreſhments, would there always find abundance

dance of proviſions brought from Madagaſcar, and of conſequence would not be ſubjected to the neceſſity of loſing their time at the Cape, or at Batavia, begging refreſhments from the Dutch, whilſt the enemies of France, as happened in the late war, are conquering their ſettlements, and deſtroying their trade.*

Wheat would grow in Madagaſcar in the ſame abundance as rice: it was formerly cultivated ſucceſsfully in the ſettlement which we then poſſeſſed at the ſouthern point of the iſland, called Fort Dauphin. Even at this day fine ſtalks of wheat are ſtill to be found there, produced

* Perhaps it may be owing to ſome hint here given, that the French (as is reported) are now again endeavouring to eſtabliſh ſettlements on the iſland of Madagaſcar.

from the ſcattered grains of the ancient crops, which being blown about by the winds, have annually, ſince our being drove from that ſettlement, ſown of themſelves, and ſprung up at random, amongſt the native herbs of the country. The lands there are of inconceivable fertility; the iſlanders intelligent and ingenious. In thoſe diſtricts where the Arabs have not penetrated, the ſimple laws of nature are their guides; their manners the manners of the primitive ages. Theſe laws, and theſe manners, are more favourable for agriculture, than all our ſublime ſpeculations, than all our moſt applauded theories on the moſt approved practice; than all thoſe ineffectual means now employed to re-animate an art, which our manners teach us to regard with contempt,

or

or treat with levity; and which is perpetually haraſſed, perpetually oppreſſed by innumerable abuſes, which derive their ſource from the very laws themſelves.

THE ISLE OF BOURBON.

Almoſt 200 leagues eaſt of Madagaſcar lie the two iſlands of Bourbon and France; the ſoil of which is naturally as fertile as that of Madagaſcar, whilſt they enjoy a happier climate. Bourbon has no port: it is of conſequence little frequented by the ſhipping. The inhabitants have preſerved their ſimplicity of manners, and agriculture is there in a flouriſhing ſtate. The iſland produces wheat, rice, and maize, not only for its own conſumpt, but even furniſhes a ſmall ſupply to the Iſle of

France : the culture there is the ſame as at Madagaſcar. The horned cattle and ſheep, which they have imported from that iſland, thrive here extremely well, eſpecially as they have alſo introduced the graſs called *Fatak*, which, as I have before obſerved, makes excellent paſturage.

The lands of this iſland are principally employed in the culture of the coffee-tree. The firſt plants of this ſhrubby tree were brought from Mocha. It multiplies by its grains. ſowing ſpontaneouſly ; little attention is required ; nothing more is neceſſary than to grub up, three or four times during the firſt year, the neighbouring weeds, which would otherwiſe rob it of its proper nouriſhment : the ſecond year it grows without care ; its branches which extend hori-

horizontally along the ſurface of the ground, by their ſhade ſtifle the growth of all ſuch weeds, as might ſhoot up within their circumference: at the end of eighteen months the coffee-tree begins to bear fruit, and in three years yields a plentiful crop. They plant theſe trees chequer-wiſe, at about the diſtance of ſeven feet from one another, and, when they grow too tall, prune them to the height of perhaps two feet from the ground.

The coffee-tree demands a light ſoil: it thrives better in ſand almoſt pure, than in rich ground: they obſerve in the iſle of Bourbon, that theſe trees yield annually, one with another about a pound of coffee: this fruit comes to perfection, and is gathered-in during dry weather,

which gives it a great advantage over the Weſt India coffee, which never ripens nor is got-in but in the rainy ſeaſons. The coffee, after it is gathered-in, muſt be dried; for ſeveral days, therefore, it is expoſed to the ſun, till the bean becomes extremely dry; they then clear it of the pulp, which is done by peſtles in large wooden troughs.

THE ISLE OF FRANCE.

This iſland poſſeſſes two excellent harbours, where all the ſhipping of the French Company, employed in the commerce of China and the Indies, touch for refreſhments; here alſo rendezvous their armaments in times of war: this iſland is, of conſequence, not ſo ſolitary as Bourbon. The politics and manners of Europe have

have here more influence. The lands are as fertile as thoſe of Bourbon; rivulets, which are never dry, water it like a garden: notwithſtanding which the harveſts often fail, and ſcarcity is here almoſt perpetually felt.

Since the days of the celebrated M. de la Bourdonnois (who governed this iſland for ten or twelve years, and ought to be regarded as the founder of the colony, for his introduction and patronage of agriculture) they have wandered inceſſantly from project to project; attempting the culture of almoſt every ſpecies of plants, without properly proſecuting any one of them. The coffee, the cotton, the indigo, the ſugar-cane, the pear, the cinnamon, the mulberry, the tea, and the cocoa trees,

have all been cultivated by experiments, but in ſuch a ſuperficial manner as could never ſecure ſucceſs. Had they followed the ſimple plan of the founder which was to ſecure bread, the iſland would at this day have been flouriſhing; abundance would then have reigned amongſt the coloniſts, and the ſhipping never been diſappointed of the neceſſary refreſhments and proviſions.

The cultivation of grain, nevertheleſs, though neglected and badly underſtood, is that which ſucceeds the beſt. Thoſe lands, which are ſo employed, yield annually a crop of wheat, and another of rice or Turkey corn, without the intervention of one fallow year, and without the leaſt improvement, or any

any other mode of labour, than that which is practiſed at Madagaſcar.

The *Maniac* was firſt introduced into this iſland by M. de la Bourdonnois: the culture of this plant was at firſt attended with very great difficulty, but is now the principal reſource of the coloniſts for the nouriſhment of their ſlaves. As the culture of this root is here the ſame as in America, I ſhall not repeat what has been related by a number of travellers.

They formerly brought from Madagaſcar black cattle and ſheep; but ſince they have diſcovered that more advantage attends the tranſportation of ſlaves, they have neglected the increaſe of their cattle, which the continual demands of the ſhipping,

and the wants of the inhabitants at the ſame time, daily diminiſh: beſides, they have never hitherto formed any paſtures; ſuch as they have attempted having been laid out with ſo little ſkill, that they have not ſucceeded. The iſland produces naturally, in different cantons, an excellent kind of graſs, which grows to the heighth of five or ſix feet. This graſs begins to appear above ground about the beginning of the rainy ſeaſon; it performs all its vegetation during the three months, which this ſeaſon laſts: the inhabitants take advantage of this to paſture their herds, who fatten upon it amazingly; but, the vegetation over, there remains nothing on the ground but a ſtraw too hard to afford nouriſhment to the cattle; and, ſoon after, the fire, which is kindled here by a thouſand

acci-

accidents, conſumes this ſtraw, and with it frequently part of the neighbouring foreſts. During the remainder of the year, the herds wander about and languiſh amongſt the woods.

The greateſt fault which has been committed in this iſland, and which has proved moſt prejudicial to cultivation, is the method of clearing the woods from off the grounds by fire, without leaving groves and thickets at proper diſtances. The rains, in this iſland, conduce moſt to the amelioration of the grounds; but the clouds being ſtopt by the foreſts, there the rains fall; whilſt the cleared lands are ſcarce watered by a ſingle drop: the fields, at the ſame time, being thus deprived of defence, are expoſed to the violence of the winds, which

which often entirely deſtroy the harveſts.—The Dutch, as we have before obſerved, found no trees at the Cape; but they have planted them there, as ſhelter for their habitations. The Iſle of France, on the contrary, was covered with woods, and the coloniſts have entirely deſtroyed them.

COAST OF COROMANDEL.

Agriculture has ever flouriſhed in the Eaſt-Indies; it has, however, degenerated ſince the conqueſt of this country by the Moguls; who, like all barbarous nations, have deſpiſed that induſtry which nouriſhes mankind, to attach themſelves to that deſtructive art which deſolates the earth.

The

The conquerors, when they took poſſeſſion of the country, appropriated to themſelves at the ſame time all the lands. The Mogul emperors divided them into great moveable fiefs, which they diſtributed amongſt their grandees; theſe farmed them out to their vaſſals; and thoſe again to others; ſo that the lands are now no longer cultivated but by the ſervants and day-labourers of the ſub-farmers.

As no country in the world is more expoſed to revolution than the Indies, ſubjected to maſters whoſe government is an abſolute anarchy, the poſſeſſor of the fief, as well as the farmer, for ever uncertain of their fate endeavour to make the moſt of the lands and their cultivators, without ever beſtowing a thought on improvement.

provement. Fortunately for theſe Barbarian conquerors, the conquered natives, inviolably attached to their ancient manners, apply themſelves inceſſantly to agriculture, from inclination, and from religion. Notwithſtanding the frantic deſpotiſm of the Mogul government, the Malabar *, deſpiſing and pitying the maſter whom he obeys, cultivates, with the ſame ardor as if he was proprietor, the fields of his anceſtors, the care of which is confided to him by the uſurper.

The labourers are a tribe much honoured among the Indians. Religion has conſecrated agriculture, even to

* The French give the name of Malabar, not only to the ancient inhabitants of the Malabar coaſt, but in general to the Aborigines of the great Peninſula of Indoſtan.

to the animals deſtined for the labour of the ground. As the Indies in general are deficient in paſtures, as horſes are ſcarce, as buffaloes and other cattle for the draught multiply but ſlowly, the ancient Indian policy made it a crime againſt their religion to kill theſe uſeful animals.——The Malabars make them more ſerviceable than any other people: they employ them, as we do, in labouring the ground; as alſo in drawing their carriages, and in carrying every kind of load: there are no other beaſts of burden in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry. I am convinced that in every country they might be rendered equally uſeful.

The ſoil on the Coromandel coaſt is light, dry, and ſandy; the induſtry and labour, however, of the natives

tives make it produce two crops every year, without the neceſſity of one fallow ſeaſon. After the rice harveſt is over, there is always a crop of ſome ſmaller grains, ſuch as millet, and a ſpecies of French beans, of which India produces a variety of different kinds.

The moſt remarkable proceſs of Indian huſbandry, is the watering their grounds for the culture of rice.

MACHINE FOR WATERING RICE-GROUNDS.

If the grounds they propoſe watering, have neither rivulet nor fountain ſufficiently abundant, they dig a pit-well, on the brink of which they raiſe a pillar of near the ſame height as the depth of the well. At the

the ſummit of this pillar, which is forked, is an iron bar, which croſſing both diviſions horizontally, ſupports a kind of ſee-ſaw, to one end of which a ladder is ſuſpended; the other end of this ſee-ſaw projects from the top of the pillar about three feet, having a long pole faſtened to it in a poſition parallel with the pillar, at which hangs a large bucket of wood or copper: by the ſide of this machine is a large reſervoir, built with bricks and cloſely cemented, elevated above the level of the grounds they propoſe to water; the opening whence the waters are diſcharged being on that ſide which fronts the field. Every thing being thus diſpoſed, a man aſcends to the top of the column, by the ladder fixed to the ſee-ſaw: as ſoon as he has reached the top, another man,

ſtationed

ſtationed by the ſide of the reſervoir, plunges the bucket, which is ſuſpended by the pole, into the well; upon which he at the top deſcends the ladder, and bringing thereby the bucket full of water to a level with the reſervoir, the other there empties it. As ſoon as the reſervoir is full, they open a kind of ſluice; the inundation begins, and is kept conſtantly flowing by the operations of theſe two men, who ſometimes are thus employed whole days, the one aſcending and deſcending, the other throwing the bucket into the well, and emptying it when full.

MODE OF LABOUR.

The Malabars labour their grounds with inſtruments reſembling the Aire and the Souchée, in uſe in the ſouth of

of France. They employ oxen, but more commonly buffaloes; theſe laſt being ſtronger, and more capable of enduring the heat, than the oxen, which on the coaſt of Coromandel, are generally weakly, and of a ſmall ſize.

FLOCKS OF SHEEP, &c.

Theſe animals are generally fed with the ſtraw of rice, ſome herbs, and boiled beans. Here and there in the fields you ſee ſome ſmall flocks of goats, and others of ſheep, which differ from ours by their being covered with hair inſtead of wool. They are known in the French colonies by the name of *Chiens marous*. Theſe flocks, however, are lean, and multiply but ſlowly.

Were

Were the inhabitants of India to eat the fleſh of animals, like the Europeans, their cattle would very ſoon be deſtroyed. It appears, therefore, that the religious law rendering it criminal for an Indian to eat the fleſh of animals, has been dictated by the wiſdom of ſound policy, which has employed the authority of religion to ſecure obedience to a regulation which the nature of the climate required.

The principal food of the Malabars is grain, butter, pulſe, and fruits. They eat nothing which has ever enjoyed life. The countries to the ſouth and weſt of Indoſtan, are the granaries of this vaſt continent, and maintain the inhabitants in abundance. Theſe countries ſtill remain

in

in the poſſeſſion of the Aborigines of the country, whoſe laws are extremely favourable for agriculture. The Moguls have endeavoured often to make themſelves maſters of theſe countries, but hitherto in vain.

GARDENS.

In the Malabar gardens there is no kind of pulſe equal to ours. Excluſive of the various kinds of French-bean, ſome of which are of the arboreſcent kind; the beſt they cultivate is the *Bazella*, known in France by the name of the *Spinage of China*; this is a lively, clambering plant, which, while growing, they ſupport upon ſticks, like our peaſe, or prop up againſt the walls, which it very ſoon covers with a moſt agreeable verdure

verdure; its taſte is almoſt the ſame with our ſpinage.

Gardening is but little known on the Coromandel coaſt. The orchards are better ſupplied than the gardens; yet they have no fruits that can be compared to thoſe of Europe. They do not underſtand the art of engrafting. Their moſt common fruits are the pine-apple, the mango, the bonana, and the gouyave. The two firſt of theſe fruits are but indifferent on the Coromandel coaſt, though excellent on the Malabar coaſt, and ſeveral other parts of India.

THE COCOA-TREE.

The moſt uſeful of all the trees in their orchards is undoubtedly the cocoa-tree. This tree bears cluſters of

nuts

nuts of an immenſe ſize. When theſe nuts are ripe, they yield a ſpecies of oil in great abundance, which the Indians uſe for various purpoſes, particularly in ſeaſoning their garden ſtuff; the taſte of this oil, however, is extremely diſagreeable to thoſe who are not accuſtomed to eat it. But the method of rendering the culture of this tree moſt advantageous, is the extracting wine from its fruit. The Indian watches the time when the nuts of the cocoa-tree have attained to the ſize of our ordinary nuts, which happens ſoon after the fall of the flower: he then makes an inciſion in the ſtalk of the cluſter about ſeven or eight inches from the trunk of the tree; here he faſtens an earthen veſſel to receive the juice, which iſſues in great abundance: the mouth of the veſſel he carefully

wraps

wraps round with a cloth, to prevent the admiſſion of the air, which would ſoon turn it to the fret. The veſſel fills in twenty-four hours: the Indian takes care to change it every day. This natural wine which is called *Soury*, is ſold and drunk in this ſtate. It has much of the taſte and ſtrength of the *Muſt*, or new wine of the grape: it keeps, however, but a few days; it is neceſſary then to diſtil it, otherwiſe it would ſour, and become entirely uſeleſs. This ſpecies of wine, when diſtilled, is the well-known liquor called *Arrack*.

A cocoa-tree, thus managed, is worth a pagoda (about eight ſhillings) per annum. Theſe trees are planted about twenty-five or thirty feet diſtant from each other. They

produce

produce nothing for ten or twelve years, but then annually bear fruit for above fifty years. They flouriſh beſt in a mixed ſandy ſoil; and ſucceed extremely well even in pure ſand.

The Malabars cultivate, in the open fields, a variety of plants, whoſe productions are of an oily ſubſtance; ſuch as the *Seſame* or *Gergelin*, which is a kind of fox-graſs, and the *Ricin* or *Palma Chriſti*. The freſh oil extracted from this plant, which is known in Europe for a violent and dangerous cauſtic, cannot have the ſame hurtful quality in the Indies, as the Malabars conſider it as a gentle purgative, and the beſt remedy for almoſt all the diſeaſes incident to infants at the breaſt; giving them uſually, every month, a ſpoonful of it,

mixed in an equal quantity of their mother's milk.

I ſhall conclude this article by obſerving, that the reader muſt not form an idea of agriculture over the Indies in general, from the ſketch I have given of that on the Coromandel coaſt: this coaſt, and the countries adjacent, form but a ſmall part of the Eaſt-Indies, properly ſo called: they are, at the ſame time, the moſt barren, and have ſuffered moſt from the devaſtations of the Moguls, from the deſtructive government of theſe conquerors, and from the continual wars which harraſs and depopulate the country. The coaſts of Orixa, Malabar, the territory of Surat, the banks of the Ganges, and the interior parts of Indoſtan, are much more fertile, and in many of theſe coun-

countries agriculture flouriſhes ſurpriſingly.—I relate nothing but facts, which I had opportunities of obſerving myſelf.

THE KINGDOM OF SIAM.

The kingdom of Siam, ſituate on the peninſula of the Indies beyond the Ganges, is in general extremely fertile. Divided, like Indoſtan, by a chain of mountains from north to ſouth, it enjoys, all the year round, and at the ſame time, two very oppoſite ſeaſons. The weſtern diviſion, all along the bay of Bengal, is deluged by continual rains, during the ſix months that the monſoons continue to blow from the weſt. This ſeaſon is conſidered as their winter on this coaſt; whilſt in the other diviſion of the kingdom, towards the eaſt, they

enjoy the fineſt climate, and never experience that difference of ſeaſon, which reigns on the weſtern ſide, except by the overflowing of the Menam. This noble river runs along a great way among mountains, where the rains concenter : it waſhes the walls of the capital, and annually overflows, without the leaſt ravage, a delightful country, covered all over with rice plantations. The ſlime, which the Menam leaves behind, enriches the ſoil prodigiouſly ; the rice ſeems to grow up in proportion as the inundation riſes, and the river at length gently retires by degrees into its bed, as the rice approaches to maturity, and has no further occaſion for its waters. How bountiful has nature been to thoſe who inhabit this charming country !—ſhe has, however, done more : the fields pro-

produce, in profuſion, an infinite variety of moſt delicate fruits, which require almoſt no cultivation; ſuch as the pine-apple, the mangouſtas, (the moſt delicate fruit perhaps in the world) mangoes of different kinds, and all excellent, ſeveral ſpecies of oranges, the banana, the ducion, the gacca, with other fruits of an inferior quality. Nature, ſtill more bountiful, has alſo ſcattered over this country, almoſt on the ſurface of the ground, mines of gold, copper, and a ſpecies of fine tin, which there, as in other parts of India, they name *Calin*.

In this terreſtrial paradiſe, ſurrounded with ſo much riches, who would imagine that the Siameſe are, perhaps, the moſt wrethed people in the world?

The government of Siam is deſpotic : the ſovereign alone enjoys that liberty which is natural to all mankind : his ſubjects are all his ſlaves ; every one of them is annually taxed at ſix months perſonal ſervice without wages, and even without food : he allows them the other ſix months to procure themſelves wherewithal to exiſt the year. Under ſuch a government, there is no law that can afford protection to individuals againſt violence, or in the ſmalleſt degree ſecure them in their property. Every thing is ſubjected to the caprice of a prince, rendered brutal by every ſpecies of exceſs, particularly that of power ; who paſſes his days locked up in his ſeraglio, without an idea of any thing beyond the walls of his palace ; and particularly ignorant of the

the wretched condition of his ſubjects. Theſe are expoſed to the avarice of the grandees, who themſelves are only the chief ſlaves, and tremblingly approach, on appointed days, the preſence of their tyrant, whom they adore like a divinity, though ſubject to the moſt dangerous caprices.

Religion alone has preſerved the power of protecting againſt tyranny thoſe who, ranging themſelves under its ſtandard, are admitted into the order of the prieſts of *Somonacondom*, the deity of the Siameſe. Thoſe who embrace this order, and their number is conſiderable, are by law obliged to obſerve the ſtricteſt celibacy, which, in a warm climate, ſuch as that of Siam, whilſt it occaſions

great diſorders, almoſt depopulates the country.

It may eaſily be conceived, that under ſuch a government agriculture cannot flouriſh; it may be ſaid, even, that no regard is paid to it at all, when the ſmall portion of ground which is laboured, is compared to the immenſe extent of lands which are totally neglected.

With regard even to thoſe grounds which they have laid out, nature may be ſaid to do every thing. Men oppreſſed, debaſed, without ſpirit, nay, in a manner without hands, give themſelves ſcarce any other trouble than juſt to reap what the earth produces; and, as the country is extenſive, and thinly peopled, they enjoy

enjoy abundance of neceſſaries, almoſt without labour.

From the port of Mergin, ſituated on the weſtern coaſt of this kingdom, to the capital, during a journey of ten or twelve days, you croſs immenſe plains, charmingly watered, and the ſoil excellent : ſome of which appear to have been formerly tilled, but now lie quite uncultivated. This journey travellers are under the neceſſity of making in caravans, in order to defend themſelves from the tygers and the elephants, to which this fine country is in a manner entirely abandoned, during a journey of eight days there ſcarce being the veſtige of a habitation.

The environs of the capital are cultivated ; the lands belonging to the

king, thoſe of the princes, the miniſters, and principal officers diſplay the amazing fertility of the country, producing, as I have been aſſured, an increaſe of two hundred-fold.

The Siameſe method of cultivating their rice, is firſt to ſow it very thick in a ſmall ſquare plot of ground, well watered, a little below the ſurface of the earth. As ſoon as the plants have grown about five or ſix inches high, they pull them up by the roots, and tranſplant them in ſmall parcels of three or four ſtalks, diſtant from each other about four inches every way. Theſe plants are placed deep in a clay ſoil, which has been previouſly well laboured with a plow, drawn by two buffaloes. The rice, tranſplanted in this manner, has beyond compariſon a much greater

in-

increaſe, than if allowed to grow up in the ſame ground where it was originally planted.

It is the Chineſe, and the Cochinchineſe, ſettled in the capital and its neighbourhood, who contribute moſt to the improvement of the grounds. Theſe ſtrangers are uſeful to the ſovereign, by the commerce they carry on with him, and it is the intereſt of the government to protect them from oppreſſion.

In the neighbourhood of the uncultivated lands I have mentioned, you find others, belonging to different individuals, who, diſcouraged by continual oppreſſions, have quite abandoned them. It is aſtoniſhing, however, to obſerve theſe lands, frequently neither laboured nor ſown for

for years together, produce extraordinary crops of rice. The grain, reaped negligently, ſows of itſelf, and re-produces annually another harveſt, by the help of the inundations of the river Menam; which proves, at the ſame time, the extreme fertility of the ground, and the extreme miſery of the inhabitants.

The orchards of the prince, and the great Talapoins *, are admirable for the variety of their fruits, all of the moſt exquiſite kind; but theſe delicacies no private individual is allowed to enjoy. When a man is ſo unhappy as to have in his grounds a tree of excellent fruit, ſuch as the mangouſtas, a party of ſoldiers never fail to come every year, to ſecure, for the

* A religious order.

the king, or ſome great miniſter, the produce of this tree. They take an account of every mangouſta, good or bad, making the proprietor guardian and ſecurity for the whole; and, when the fruits ripen, ſhould there happen the ſmalleſt deficiency, the poor proprietor is ſubjected to all the inſolence of unreſtrained power; it becomes, of conſequence, a real misfortune for a private man to be poſſeſſed of ſuch a tree.

The Siameſe rear herds of buffaloes, and horned cattle; but all the care they take of them is, to conduct them, in the day time, to the fallow grounds, which abound in paſtures, and re-conduct them, in the evening, to the incloſures, in order to ſecure them from the tygers, of which there are great numbers in this country.

The

The milk, and a very little labour, is all the advantage they draw from them. Their religion, which is the ſame that prevails in Indoſtan, and which the Talapoins alone know any thing about, forbids them killing theſe animals. They elude, however, this law, by ſelling them to the Mahometans ſettled among them, who kill them, and ſell their fleſh privately. They have alſo great numbers of poultry, particularly ducks, of the beſt kinds in the Indies.

The king maintains a number of tame elephants. Each of theſe monſtrous animals has twelve or fifteen men daily employed in cutting herbs, bananiers, (a kind of large roſe) and ſugar-canes. They are after all of no real uſe; they ſerve only for ſhew. They diſplay, ſay the Si-

ameſe,

ameſe, the grandeur of their prince; and he conceives an idea of his greatneſs, more from the number of his elephants, than from the number of his ſubjects.

Theſe animals, wherever they come, make moſt deſtructive havock; of this their keepers take advantage, making every individual, who is poſſeſſed of cultivated lands, or gardens, pay annually a certain tribute: ſhould they refuſe, the elephants would immediately be let looſe, and ravage and ruin deſolate their fields: for what ſubject would be hardy enough to dare to fail in reſpect to the elephants of the king of Siam, many of which, to the diſgrace of humanity, are loaded with a profuſion of titles, and preferred to the firſt dignities in the kingdom.

THE

THE MALAIS.

Beyond the kingdom of Siam is the peninſula of Malacca; a country formerly well peopled, and, conſequently, well cultivated. This nation was once one of the greateſt powers, and made a very conſiderable figure on the theatre of Aſia. The ſea was covered with their ſhips, and they carried on a moſt extenſive commerce. Their laws, however, were apparently very different from thoſe which ſubſiſt among them at preſent. From time to time they ſent out numbers of colonies, which, one after another, peopled the iſlands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, the Celebes or Macaſſor, the Moluccas, the Philippines, and thoſe innumerable iſlands of the Archipelago, which bound Aſia on the eaſt, and which occupy

cupy an extent of ſeven hundred leagues in longitude, from eaſt to weſt, by about ſix hundred of latitude, from north to ſouth. The inhabitants of all theſe iſlands, thoſe at leaſt upon the coaſts, are the ſame people; they ſpeak almoſt the ſame language, have the ſame laws, the ſame manners. — Is it not ſomewhat ſingular, that this nation, whoſe poſſeſſions are ſo extenſive, ſhould ſcarce be known in Europe?—I ſhall endeavour to give you an idea of thoſe laws, and thoſe manners; you will, from thence, eaſily judge of their agriculture.

Travellers, who make obſervations on the Malais, are aſtoniſhed to find, in the center of Aſia, under the ſcorching climate of the line, the laws, the manners, the cuſtoms, and the

the prejudices of the ancient inhabitants of the north of Europe. The Malais are governed by feudal laws, that capricious ſyſtem, conceived for the defence of the liberty of a few, againſt the tyranny of one, whilſt the multitude is ſubjected to ſlavery and oppreſſion.

A chief, who has the title of king, or ſultan, iſſues his commands to his great vaſſals, who obey when they think proper. Theſe have inferior vaſſals, who often act in the ſame manner with regard to them. A ſmall part of the nation live independent, under the title of *Oramçai*, or *noble*, and ſell their ſervices to thoſe who pay them beſt; whilſt the body of the nation is compoſed of ſlaves, and live in perpetual ſervitude.

With

With theſe laws the Malais are reſtleſs, fond of navigation, war, plunder, emigrations, colonies, deſperate enterprizes, adventures, and gallantry. They talk inceſſantly of their honour, and their bravery, whilſt they are univerſally conſidered, by thoſe with whom they have intercouſe, as the moſt treacherous, ferocious people on the face of the globe; and yet, which appeared to me extremely ſingular, they ſpeak the ſofteſt language of Aſia. That which the Count de Forbin has ſaid, in his memoirs, of the ferocity of the Macaſſars, is exactly true, and is the reigning characteriſtic of the whole Malay nations. More attached to the abſurd laws of their pretended honour, than to thoſe of juſtice or humanity, you always obſerve, that

amongſt

amongſt them, the ſtrong oppreſs and deſtroy the weak: their treaties of peace and friendſhip never ſubſiſting beyond that ſelf-intereſt which induced them to make them, they are almoſt always armed, and either at war amongſt themſelves, or employed in pillaging their neighbours.

This ferocity, which the Malais qualify under the name of courage, is ſo well known to the European companies, who have ſettlements in the Indies, that they have univerſally agreed in prohibiting the captains of their ſhips, who may put into the Malay iſlands, from taking on board any ſeamen of that nation, except in the greateſt diſtreſs, and then, on no account, to exceed two or three.

It is nothing uncommon for a handful of theſe horrid ſavages ſuddenly to embark, attack a veſſel by ſurprize, poignard in hand, maſſacre the people, and make themſelves maſters of her. Malay batteaus, with twenty-five or thirty men, have been known to board European ſhips of thirty or forty guns, in order to take poſſeſſion of them, and murder with their poignards great part of the crew. The Malay hiſtory is full of ſuch enterprizes, which mark the deſperate ferocity of theſe barbarians.

The Malais, who are not ſlaves, go always armed: they would think themſelves diſgraced, if they went abroad without their poignards which they call *Crit*. The induſtry of this

this nation even ſurpaſſes itſelf, in the fabrick of this deſtructive weapon.

As their lives are a perpetual round of agitation and tumult, they could never endure the long flowing habits, which prevail amongſt the other Aſiatics. The habits of the Malais are exactly adapted to their ſhapes, and loaded with a multitude of buttons, which faſten them cloſe to their bodies in every part. — I relate theſe ſeemingly trifling obſervations, in order to prove, that, in climates the moſt oppoſite, the ſame laws produce ſimilar manners, cuſtoms, and prejudices. Their effect is the ſame too with reſpect to agriculture.

The lands poſſeſſed by the Malais are, in general, of a ſuperior quality.

lity. Nature ſeems to have taken pleaſure in there aſſembling her moſt favourite productions. They have not only thoſe to be found in the territories of Siam, but a variety of others peculiar to theſe iſlands. The country is covered with odoriferous woods, ſuch as the eagle or aloes wood, the ſandal, and the caſſia odorata, a ſpecies of cinnamon. You there breathe an air impregnated with the odours of innumerable flowers of the greateſt fragrance, of which there is a perpetual ſucceſſion the year round, the ſweet flavour of which captivates the ſoul, and inſpires the moſt voluptuous ſenſations. No traveller, wandering over the plains of Malacca, but feels himſelf ſtrongly impelled to wiſh his reſidence fixed in a place ſo luxuriant in allurements,

where

where nature triumphs without the aſſiſtance of art.

The Malay iſlands produce various kinds of dying woods, particularly the *Sapan*, which is the ſame with the Braſil wood. There are alſo a number of gold mines, which the inhabitants of Sumatra and Malacca call *Ophirs:* ſome of which, thoſe eſpecially on the eaſtern coaſt, are richer than thoſe of Brazil or Peru. There are likewiſe mines of fine copper, mixed with gold, which the inhabitants name *Tombage.* In the iſlands of Sumatra and Banea are mines of calin, or fine tin; and at Succadana, in the iſland of Borneo, is a mine of diamonds. Thoſe iſlands enjoy alſo, excluſively, the rotin, the ſagou, (or bread-palm-tree) the camphre, and other precious aromatics,

matics, which we know under the names of various ſpiceries.

The ſea too teems with abundance of excellent fiſh, together with ambergris, pearls, and thoſe delicate birds neſts (ſo much in requeſt in China) formed in the rocks with the ſpawn of fiſhes, and the foam of the ſea, by a ſpecies of ſmall-ſized ſwallow, peculiar to thoſe ſeas: this is of ſuch an exquiſite ſubſtance and flavour, that the Chineſe long purchaſed them for their weight in gold, and ſtill buy them at an exceſſive price.

In the midſt of all this luxuriance of nature, the Malay is miſerable. The culture of the lands, abandoned to ſlaves, is fallen into contempt. Theſe wretched labourers, dragged

inceſſantly from their ruſtic employments, by their reſtleſs maſters, who delight in war and maritime enterprizes, have rarely time, and never reſolution, to give the neceſſary attention to the labouring of their grounds. Their lands, in general, remain uncultivated; and produce no kind of grain for the ſubſiſtence of the inhabitants.

SAGOU.

The ſagou-tree, in part, ſupplies the defect of grain. This admirable tree is a preſent which bountiful nature has made to men incapable of labour. It requires no culture; it is a ſpecies of the palm-tree, which grows naturally, in the woods, to the height of about twenty or thirty feet; its circumference being ſometimes

times from five to ſix. Its ligneous bark is about an inch in thickneſs, and covers a multitude of long fibres, which, being interwoven one with another, envelope a maſs of a gummy kind of meal. As ſoon as this tree is ripe, a whitiſh duſt, which tranſpires through the pores of the leaves, and adheres to their extremities, proclaims its maturity. The Malais then cut them down near the root, divide them into ſeveral ſections, which they ſplit into quarters: they then ſcoop out the maſs of mealy ſubſtance, which is enveloped by and adheres to the fibres; they dilute it in pure water, and then paſs it through a ſtraining bag of fine cloth, in order to ſeparate it from the fibres. When this paſte has loſt part of its moiſture by eva-

 poration,

poration, the Malais throw it into a kind of earthen veſſels, of different ſhapes, where they allow it to dry and harden. This paſte is wholeſome nouriſhing food, and preſerves for many years.

The Indians, in general, when they eat the ſagou, uſe no other preparation than diluting it in water; but ſometimes they dreſs it after different manners: they have the art of ſeparating the fineſt of the flour, and reducing it to little grains, ſomewhat reſembling grains of rice. The ſagou, thus prepared, is preferred to the other, for the aged and infirm; and is an excellent remedy for many complaints in the ſtomach. When diluted, either in cold or boiling water, it forms a whitiſh jelly, very agreeable to the taſte.

Though

Though this ſagou-bearing-palm grows naturally in the foreſts, the Malay chiefs have formed conſiderable plantations of it, which conſtitute one of their principal reſources for ſubſiſtence.

They might have the fineſt orchards in the world, would they give themſelves the trouble to collect the various plants of thoſe excellent fruits which nature has ſo liberally beſtowed upon them: we find, however, none but a few ſtraggling trees planted at random around their houſes, or diſperſed over their lands without ſymmetry or order.

The inhabitants of the great iſland of Java have ſomewhat better ideas of agriculture, than the other Malais,

ſince their ſubjection to the government of the Dutch. Theſe ſovereign merchants have taken advantage of the feudal ſyſtem of the Malais, to reduce them under their yoke; artfully weakening the regal power, by fomenting, at times, the rebellions of the great vaſſals; and humbling the vaſſals, in their turn, by ſuccouring their princes, when drove to the brink of ruin.

The Javaneſe begin to recover from that ſtate of anarchy, the conſequence of their ancient laws now almoſt no longer remembered. They cultivate, with ſucceſs, rice, coffee, indigo, and ſugar-cane. They rear, on the eaſtern coaſt of the iſland and in the diſtricts of Madur and Solor, in the neighbourhood, numerous herds of buffaloes,

loes, of a monſtrous ſize; their fleſh is excellent, and they are of infinite uſe in labouring the ground. They have likewiſe numbers of horned cattle, the largeſt and fineſt, perhaps, in the world. The common paſturage in this and the reſt of the Malay iſlands, is the ſame graſs I have mentioned under the article of the iſle of France, which the coloniſts there almoſt entirely neglect.

Here it would be proper to deſcribe the manner of cultivating the ſpiceries, the indigo, the ſugar-cane, and the camphre; but theſe muſt be the ſubject of another diſcourſe. I could have wiſhed alſo to have comprehended, in this memoir, the obſervations I have made on the huſbandry of China. You could then have compared nation againſt nation; and,

after having obſerved agriculture deſpiſed and debaſed amongſt barbarians, oppreſſed and loaded with fetters by their frantic laws, the genuine productions of delirium incompatible with reaſon, you would have beheld this art, (divine it may be called, as taught to man by the great author of his being) ſupported and protected by the moſt ſimple of laws, thoſe of nature, dictated by her to the firſt inhabitants of the earth, and preſerved, ſince the beginning of time, from generation to generation, by one of the wiſeſt and greateſt nations in the world. This comparative repreſentation, whilſt, on the one hand, it diſplayed the miſery and misfortunes of every kind, which attend the neglect of agriculture, would, on the other, have demonſtrated

ſtrated how much this art, honoured, protected, and encouraged as it ought, will ever advance the happineſs of the human race.

END OF PART FIRST.

TRAVELS

OF A

PHILOSOPHER.

PART SECOND.

TRAVELS

OF A

PHILOSOPHER.

PART SECOND.

TRAVELS

OF A

PHILOSOPHER.

PART SECOND.

I LAST year began to give you a ſketch of my inquiries into the ſtate of agriculture among different nations of Africa and Aſia. I obſerved, that ſcarce a veſtige of it could be traced amongſt the ſtupid the indolent negroes, who inhabit the weſtern coaſts of Africa; whilſt it flouriſhed, under the ſhade of liberty, amongſt the Hollanders at the Cape of Good Hope. I pointed out the happy abundance which reigned in

in the fertile iſland of Madagaſcar, inhabited by a people governed by the greateſt ſimplicity of manners, and unacquainted with other laws than thoſe of nature. Whilſt I did juſtice alſo to the ſyſtem of cultivation that prevailed at the Iſle of Bourbon, which, having no port, and of conſequence little or no intercourſe with Europe, the coloniſts have preſerved an uncorrupted ſyſtem of manners, ever favourable for agriculture, I was, at the ſame time, under the neceſſity of acknowledging, that this art, which requires perſeverance and ſimplicity, was greatly neglected at the Iſle of France, which, having two excellent ports, and being much frequented by European ſhips, was more influenced by the inconſtant and volatile manners of our quarter of the world; and that, in conſequence

quence, though the ſoil, in point of fertility, was equal to Madagaſcar and Bourbon, their harveſts generally failed, and an almoſt perpetual ſcarcity prevailed over the iſland.—I paſſed from thence to the great peninſula of the Indies, where agriculture, however oppreſſed by the barbarous laws of the Mogul conquerors, is ſtill honoured and ſupported by the religion, the manners, and the perſeverance of the conquered Malabars. — At Siam, under the happieſt climate, and bleſſed with a ſoil inferior in fertility to no country in the world, agriculture we have obſerved debaſed by the indignities of tyranny, and abandoned by a race of ſlaves, whom nothing can intereſt, after the loſs of liberty.—I have repreſented it almoſt in the ſame condition

tion amongſt the Malais, who inhabit immenſe dominions, and innumerable iſlands, where nature has diſtributed her choiceſt treaſures, and laviſhed her bounties with a profuſion unknown to other regions. The deſtructive genius of the feudal laws, which keep this people in a perpetual ferment, permits not their application to the culture of the fineſt ſoil in the world. Nature alone does all. I am convinced that if the other nations of the earth, who have the misfortune to be governed by the feudal ſyſtem, inhabited a climate equally happy, and lands equally fertile with thoſe of the Malais, their agriculture would be equally neglected: neceſſity alone could force the plough into their hands.

In my laſt diſcourſe I endeavoured to give you an idea of the moſt intereſting modes of local agriculture which came under my obſervation: my principal object, however, was to enable you to remark, that in every country, in every quarter of the world, the ſtate of agriculture depends entirely on the eſtabliſhed laws, and, conſequently, on the manners, cuſtoms, and prejudices from which theſe laws derived their origin. I now proceed.

THE

THE POWER OF AGRICULTURE.

ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM OF PONTHIAMAS.

Departing from the peninſula of Malacca, and the iſlands of the Malais, towards the north, I fell in with a ſmall territory called *Cancar*, but known, on the marine charts, under the name of *Ponthiamas*. Surrounded by the kingdom of Siam, where deſpotiſm and depopulation go hand in hand, the dominions of Camboya, where no idea of eſtabliſhed government ſubſiſts; and the territories of the Malais, whoſe genius, perpetually agitated by their feudal laws, can endure peace neither at home nor abroad: this charming country, about fifty

fifty years ago, was uncultivated, and almoſt deſtitute of inhabitants.

A Chineſe merchant, commander of a veſſel which he employed in commerce, frequented theſe coaſts. Being a man of that intelligent reflective genius, which ſo characteriſtically marks his nation, he could not, without pain, behold immenſe tracts of ground condemned to ſterility, though naturally more fertile than thoſe which formed the riches of his own country: he formed, therefore, a plan for their improvement. With this view, having firſt of all hired a number of labourers, ſome Chineſe, others from the neighbouring nations, he, with great addreſs, inſinuated himſelf into the favour of the moſt powerful princes, who, for a certain

ſubſidy,

ſubſidy, aſſigned him a guard for his protection.

In the courſe of his voyage to Batavia, and the Philippine iſlands, he borrowed from the Europeans their moſt uſeful diſcoveries and improvements, particularly the art of fortification and defence: with regard to internal police, he gave the preference to the Chineſe. The profits of his commerce ſoon enabled him to raiſe ramparts, ſink ditches, and provide artillery. Theſe preliminary precautions ſecured him from a coup de main, and protected him from the enterprizes of the ſurrounding nations of barbarians.

He diſtributed the lands to his labourers, without the leaſt reſervation of any of thoſe duties or taxes known

by

by the names of ſervice or fines of alienation ; duties which by allowing no real property, become the moſt fatal ſcourge to agriculture, and is an idea which revolts againſt the common ſenſe of every wiſe nation. He provided his coloniſts, at the ſame time, with all ſorts of inſtruments proper for the labour and improvement of their grounds.

In forming a labouring and commercial people, he thought, that no laws ought to be framed, but thoſe which nature has eſtabliſhed for the human race in every climate : he made theſe laws reſpected by obeying them firſt himſelf, and exhibiting an example of ſimplicity, induſtry, frugality, humanity, and good faith : —— he formed, then, no ſyſtem of laws—he did more—he eſtabliſhed morals.

His

His territories ſoon became the country of every induſtrious man, who wiſhed to ſettle there. His port was open to all nations. The woods were cleared; the grounds judiciouſly laboured, and ſown with rice; canals, cut from the rivers watered their fields; and plentiful harveſts, after ſupplying them with ſubſiſtence, furniſhed an object of extenſive commerce.

The barbarians of the neighbourhood, amazed to ſee abundance ſo ſuddenly ſucceed to ſterility, flocked for ſubſiſtence to the magazines of Ponthiamas; whoſe dominions, at this day, are conſidered as the moſt plentiful granary of that eaſtern part of Aſia; the Malais, the Cochin-chineſe, the Siameſe, whoſe countries are naturally

turally ſo fertile, conſidering this little territory as the moſt certain reſource againſt famine.

Had the Chineſe founder of this colony of mercantile labourers, in imitation of the ſovereigns of Aſia, eſtabliſhed arbitrary impoſts; if by the introduction of a feudal ſyſtem, of which he had examples amongſt the neighbouring nations, he had veſted in himſelf the ſole property of the lands, under the ſpecious pretence of giving them away to his coloniſts; if he had made luxury reign in his palace, in place of that ſimplicity which diſtinguiſhed his humble dwelling; had he placed his ambition in a brilliant court, and crowds of fawning ſlaves; had he preferred the agreeable to the uſeful arts, deſpiſing the induſtrious, who labour the ground with

with the ſweat of their brow, and provide ſuſtenance for themſelves and their fellow creatures; had he treated his aſſociates as ſlaves; had he received into his port ſtrangers in any other ſhape than as friends; his fields had ſtill been barren, his dominions unpeopled; and the wretched inhabitants muſt have died of hunger, notwithſtanding all their knowledge of agriculture, and all the aſſiſtance they could derive from the moſt uſeful inſtruments either for tilling or ſowing their grounds. But the ſage Kiang-tſe, (the name of this judicious Chineſe) perſuaded that he ſhould be always rich, if his labourers were ſo, eſtabliſhed only a very moderate duty on all the merchandize entered at his port; the produce of his lands appearing to him ſufficient to render him powerful and great. His integrity,

grity, his moderation, and his humanity made him reſpected. He never wiſhed to reign; but only to eſtabliſh the empire of reaſon. His ſon, who now fills his place, inherits his virtues as well as his poſſeſſions: by agriculture, and the commerce he carries on with the produce of his lands, he has become ſo powerful, that the barbarians, his neighbours, ſtile him king, a title which he deſpiſes. He pretends to no right of ſovereignty, but the nobleſt of all, that of doing good; happy in being the firſt labourer, and the firſt merchant of his country, he merits, as well as his father, a title more glorious than that of king—*the friend of mankind.*

How different ſuch men from thoſe conquerors ſo celebrated, who amaze and deſolate the earth ; who, abuſing the right of conqueſt, have eſtabliſhed laws, which, even after the world has been delivered from theſe tyrants, has perpetuated, for ages, the miſeries of the human race.

CAMBOYA AND TSIAMPA.

To the northward of Ponthiamas we find the countries of Camboya and Tſiampa. They are naturally fertile, (Camboya in particular) and appear, in former times, to have been well cultivated ; but the government of theſe two little ſtates, having no ſettled form, the inhabitants being perpetually employed in deſtroying tyrants, only to receive

others

others in their place, have abandoned the culture of their grounds. Their fields which might be covered with rice, with herds, and with flocks, are deſerts; and the natives are reduced to feed on a few wretched roots, which they gather from amidſt the brambles, which overſpread their lands.

Travellers are ſurpriſed to find, at a little diſtance from the wretched canton of Camboya, the ruins of an old city, built with ſtone, the architecture of which has ſome reſemblance to that of Europe. The neighbouring fields too ſtill preſerve the traces of ridges: every thing ſhews that agriculture and the other arts have once flouriſhed there; but they have now diſappeared, with the nation who cultivated them. Thoſe

who at preſent inhabit this country have no hiſtory, no tradition even, which can throw the faintеſt light upon the ſubject.

COCHIN-CHINA.

The Cochin-chineſe, who border on Camboya to the north, obſerving the lands of this kingdom deſolate and abandoned, ſome years ago took poſſeſſion of ſuch tracks as were moſt convenient, and have there introduced an excellent culture. The province of Donnay, uſurped in this manner from Camboya, is at preſent the granary of Cochin-china. This kingdom, one of the greateſt in Eaſtern Aſia, about one hundred and fifty years ago, was inhabited by an inconſiderable nation, barbarous and ſavage, known by the name of *Loi*, who,

who, living partly by fiſhing, partly on roots, and the wild fruits of the country, paid little regard to agriculture.

A Tonquineſe prince, unſucceſsful in a war he carried on againſt the king of Tonquin, (under whom he enjoyed an office ſomewhat reſembling the maires de palais, under the Merovingian race of the kings of France) retired with his ſoldiers and adherents acroſs the river which divides that kingdom from Cochinchina. The ſavages, who then poſſeſſed this country, fled before theſe ſtrangers, and took refuge among the mountains of Tſiampa. After a long war with their old enemies, who purſued them, the Torquineſe fugitives remained at length peaceable poſſeſſors of the country known un-

der the name of Cochin-china: it extends about two hundred leagues from north to ſouth, but narrow and unequal from eaſt to weſt. They then applied themſelves entirely to the cultivation of rice, which, being the ordinary food of the inhabitants of Aſia, is to them an object of the greateſt importance. They ſeparated into little cantonments, and eſtabliſhed themſelves on the plains, which extend along the banks of the rivers.

The fertility of the ſoil, which had lain long uncultivated, ſoon recompenſed their labours by abundance; population increaſed in proportion to the culture; and their cantons extended in ſuch a manner, that all the plains of this vaſt country being put into a ſtate of improvement, they were tempted to make encroachments

ments on thoſe of Camboya, which were in a manner totally abandoned. I never ſaw any country where the progreſs of population was ſo remarkable as in Cochin-china, which muſt be attributed not only to the climate, and the fertility of the ſoil, but to the ſimplicity of their manners, to the prudence and induſtry of the women as well as the men, and to the variety of excellent fiſh, which, with rice, is their ordinary food.

CULTURE OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF RICE IN COCHIN-CHINA.

The Cochin-chineſe cultivate ſix different kinds of rice: the *Little Rice*, the grain of which is ſmall, oblong and tranſparent; this is by far the moſt delicate; it is generally ad-

miniſtered to the ſick; the *Great Long Rice* is that whoſe form is round: the *Red Rice*, ſo called, becauſe the grain is envellopped in a huſk of a reddiſh colour, which adheres ſo cloſely, that it requires a very uncommon operation to ſeparate it. Theſe three kinds are produced in the greateſt abundance, and form the principal ſubſiſtence of the natives. They require water, it being neceſſary to overflow the grounds where they are cultivated.

They raiſe alſo two other ſorts of dry rice, which grow in dry ſoils, and, like our wheat, require no other watering but what they receive from the clouds. One of theſe ſpecies of rice has a grain as white as ſnow; when dreſſed it is of a ſlimy viſcous ſubſtance; they make of it different kinds

kinds of paſte, ſuch as vermicelli. Both theſe kinds form a conſiderable article in their commerce to China. They cultivate them only on the mountains and riſing grounds, which they labour with the ſpade. They ſow theſe grains as we do wheat, about the end of December or beginning of January, when the rainy ſeaſon ends; they are not above three months in the ground, and yield a plentiful crop.

I am induced to believe, that the culture of this valuable grain would ſucceed extremely well in France. In the years 1749 and 1750 I often travelled over the mountains of Cochin-china, where this rice is cultivated; they are very high, and the temperature of the air cold: in the month of January, 1750, I obſerved

that the rice was very green, and above three inches high, although the liquor in Reaumur's thermometer was only about four degrees above the freezing point.

I carried ſome quintals of this grain to the Iſle of France, where it was ſown with ſucceſs, and produced a greater crop than any other ſpecies. The coloniſts received my preſent with the greateſt eagerneſs, as, excluſive of its ſuperior increaſe, it has a finer taſte, is attended with leſs trouble, there being no neceſſity for overflowing the fields; and, as it ripens fifteen or twenty days ſooner than the other kinds, it can be reaped and ſecured before the hurricane ſeaſon, which frequently makes dreadful havock with their later harveſts. The other kinds of rice, being of a

flower

flower growth, require their grounds to be laid under water, after the manner of the natives of the Coromandel coaſt *; but our coloniſts pay ſo little attention to agriculture, that they have never hitherto introduced it.

One might have imagined, that the advantages flowing from the cultivation of dry rice, would have engaged the coloniſts to attend to it with the greateſt care; and that, from the Iſle of France, it might have been with eaſe introduced into Europe: but I have in vain endeavoured to procure it from this iſland; thoſe to whom I have applied, have ſent me only common rice, which demands water and warmth. The culture of dry rice has,

* See page 39.

has, like every other ſpecies of agriculture, been abandoned to the unexperienced ignorance of ſlaves, who have mixed all the different kinds together, in ſuch a manner, that the rice of Cochin-china being ripe long before the others, the grains have dropt from the ears before they were reaped, and the ſpecies, in this manner, has been, by degrees, entirely loſt in that iſland. Would any traveller, whom buſineſs or curioſity might lead to Cochin-china, ſend over but a few pounds of this excellent grain, he would deſerve our warmeſt acknowledgments.

The Cochin-chineſe cultivate the common rice nearly in the ſame manner with the Malabars on the Coromandel coaſt. After having twice ploughed their ground, they ſow the

the rice in a little field which has been well laboured with the ſpade; the ſurface of this little field they juſt cover with water, to the height only of a few lines; and as ſoon as the rice is about five or ſix inches high, they harrow over their large fields, and overflow them with water; then pulling up the rice-plants in the ſeed-plots, tranſplant them into theſe grounds, thus prepared, in ſmall parcels of four or five ſtalks, about the diſtance of ſix inches the one from the other. Women and children are generally employed in this work.

The Cochin-chineſe have no machine for overflowing their grounds, nor have they any occaſion: their plains, from one end of the kingdom to the other, are commanded by a chain

a chain of high mountains, plentifully ſupplied with ſprings and rivulets, which naturally overflow the grounds, according as their courſe is directed.

They cultivate likewiſe different kinds of grains, ſuch as the mahis, millets of different ſorts, ſeveral ſpecies of the French bean, potatoes, yams, and a variety of roots proper for the ſubſiſtence of men and animals. But the culture of moſt important advantage to them, next to the rice, is the ſugar-cane; and no country in Aſia produces it in greater abundance than the Cochin-china.

SUGAR-CANES.

The ſugar-canes of this country are of two kinds: the firſt grows thick and tall, the joints at a conſiderable diſtance

diſtance from one another, the colour always green, the juice abundant, with very little of the ſalt in it. This ſpecies of cane is in general uſe for feeding and fattening of cattle; and experience teaches them, that no kind of food fattens ſooner or better the human ſpecies, as well as animals, than this ſugar-cane, eat while green, and the ſugar which is extracted from it.

The ſecond ſpecies is ſmaller in every reſpect, with its joints approaching nearer together: when ripe it aſſumes a yellow colour; and contains leſs water, and more ſalt, than the other.

The Cochin-chineſe, when preparing the ground for the ſugar-cane, turn it up to the depth of two feet; this

this operation is performed with a plank. They then plant joints or eyes of the cane, three and three together, in a horizontal poſition, in the ſame manner almoſt as they plant vines in ſeveral provinces of France. Theſe ſlips are planted chequer-wiſe about eighteen inches deep in the ground, diſtant ſix feet from one another; this operation they perform near the end of the rainy ſeaſon, in order that the ſlips may be ſufficiently watered, till ſuch time as they have taken root. During the firſt ſix months, they give them two dreſſings with a kind of pick-axe, in order to deſtroy the weeds, and preſerve a moiſture about the roots of the canes, by heaping the earth around them.

Twelve,

Twelve, and ſometimes fourteen, months after the plantation, they gather the firſt crop. By this time the canes, though planted at the diſtance of ſix feet, become ſo buſhy that it is impoſſible to enter the field, without the aſſiſtance of a hatchet to clear your way.

The canes being cut, and tied up into bundles, are carried to the mills, in order to extract their juice. I ſhall not here deſcribe the form of theſe machines, which reſemble in a great meaſure thoſe of the Weſt-Indies: inſtead of water, they employ horned cattle or mules to ſet in motion the two cylinders, between which the ſugar-canes are preſſed. Theſe engines have been deſcribed by numbers of travellers.

The

The juice being extracted, they boil it ſome hours in large kettles, in order to evaporate part of its water: it is then tranſported to the neighbouring market, and ſold in that condition. Here ends the induſtry and the profits of the Cochin-chineſe planter. The merchants purchaſe the juice, which reſembles pure water; they boil it again, throwing into the kettles ſome alkaline ſubſtance, ſuch as the aſhes of the leaves of the muſa or bananier, and ſhell-lime; they are acquainted with no other; theſe ingredients throw up a thick ſcum, which the refiner carefully ſkims off: the action of the alkali haſtens the ſeparation of the ſalt from the water, and, by the force of ebullition, reduces the juice of the cane to the conſiſtence of ſyrup. As ſoon as this

ſyrup

ſyrup begins to granulate, they decant it into a great earthen veſſel, where they cool it about an hour; when a kind of cruſt, ſtill ſoft, and of a yellowiſh colour, appears on the ſurface of the ſyrup; they loſe not a moment then to empty it into a veſſel of a conic ſhape, which they call a *form*. Without this intermediate operation of cooling the ſyrup, it would harden into a maſs, and not being granulated, would conſequently want one eſſential quality of ſugar.

Theſe ſugar-cones, or forms, in Cochin-china, are, like thoſe of our Weſt-India colonies, of baked earth, about three feet high, pierced at their narrow extremities, and contain in general about forty or fifty pounds of ſugar. Theſe *forms*, when full, are

are placed on another earthen veſſel, the mouth of which is proportioned to receive the narrow end of the cone, and muſt be large enough to contain the coarſe ſyrup, which diſtils from the ſugar, through ſome ſtraw which imperfectly ſtops up the little opening in the bottom of the *form*.

When they ſuppoſe the ſyrup has acquired the conſiſtence of ſalt in every part of the cone, they then proceed to whiten and purify it. They dilute, in a trough, a fine ſort of whitiſh clay, with ſuch a quantity of water as, when thus prepared, prevents it from having too much conſiſtence; with a truel they then lay it upon the ſurface of the ſugar to the thickneſs of about two inches, in the void ſpace left at the top of the form by the condenſing of the ſugar,

ſugar, after purging itſelf of the coarſer ſyrup or melaſſes. The water contained in the clay penetrating by degrees into the maſs, waſhes it, and carries off inſenſibly the remaining ſyrup, and every foreign particle that adheres moſt cloſely to the ſugar. When the clay hardens, they replace it with a freſh quantity, diluted as the firſt: this operation, which laſts about twelve or fifteen days, is the ſame here as in our Weſt-India colonies. Some refiners of Cochin-china, however, have another method. In place of clay, tempered thus with water, they cut into ſmall pieces the trunk of the muſa or bananier, which they place upon the ſugar: the trunk of this tree is very watery; the water of the detergent quality; and diſtills from the fibres, which

which envelope it, in very ſmall drops. Thoſe who follow this method pretend, that the operation is thereby rendered leſs tedious, and that the ſugar acquires a finer colour.

The proceſs of the Cochin-chineſe, in refining their ſugar, goes no further: they are unacquainted with the ſtoves in uſe in the Weſt-Indies. After having clayed their ſugars ſufficiently, they ſell them in the public markets, particularly to the Chineſe, and other ſtrangers, who are invited to their ports by the moderate price of this commodity, which is cheaper at Cochin-china than any where in India.

The white ſugar of the beſt quality is generally ſold at the port of Faiſo,

in

in exchange for other merchandize, at the rate of three piaſtres (about fourteen ſhillings) the Cochin-china quintal, which weighs from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds French *. The trade in this commodity is immenſe. The Chineſe alone, whoſe lands do not produce enough for their own conſumpt, purchaſe annually from Cochin-china above forty thouſand barrels, weighing about two thouſand pounds per barrel.

This country, it ſhould be obſerved, which produces this commodity in ſuch abundance, and at ſo low a price, being a new kingdom, ought to be conſidered, in ſome meaſure, as a colony : it is worthy obſervation too,

* Ninety-one pounds eight ounces French make one hundred pounds Engliſh.

too, that the ſugar-cane is there cultivated by free men, and all the proceſs of preparation and refining, the work of free hands. Compare then the price of the Cochin-chineſe production with the ſame commodity which is cultivated and prepared by the wretched ſlaves of our European colonies, and judge if, to procure ſugar from our colonies, it was neceſſary to authorize by law the ſlavery of the unhappy Africans tranſported to America. From what I have obſerved at Cochin-china, I cannot entertain a doubt, but that our Weſt-India colonies, had they been diſtributed without obſervation amongſt a free people, would have produced double the quantity that is now procured from the labour of the unfortunate negroes.

What

What advantage, then, has accrued to Europe, civilized as it is, and thoroughly verſed in the laws of nature, and the rights of mankind, by legally authorizing in our colonies the daily outrages againſt human nature, permitting them to debaſe man almoſt below the level of the beaſts of the field? Theſe ſlaviſh laws have proved as oppoſite to its intereſt as they are to its honour, and to the laws of humanity. This remark I have often made.

Liberty and property form the baſis of abundance, and good agriculture: I never obſerved it to flouriſh where thoſe rights of mankind were not firmly eſtabliſhed. The earth, which multiplies her productions with a kind of profuſion, under the hands of the free-born labourer,

ſeems to ſhrink into barrenneſs under the ſweat of the ſlave. Such is the will of the great author of our nature, who has created man free, and aſſigned to him the earth, that he might cultivate his poſſeſſion with the ſweat of his brow; but ſtill ſhould enjoy his liberty.

The Cochin-chineſe, excluſive of the ſugar-cane, employ themſelves in the culture of a variety of other productions, of great importance both to their interior fabrics, and external commerce.

They cultivate the cotton-tree, the mulberry, the pepper, the varniſh-tree, the date, the tea, the indigo, and the ſaffron, together with a plant peculiar to the country, called *Tſai*, which, being fermented like indigo, fur-

furniſhes in great plenty a flower of a green colour, which in dying, gives a durable tincture of a fine emerald colour. This plant would undoubtedly be a moſt valuable preſent to our Weſt-India colonies.

I muſt at preſent decline entering into a deſcription of the various proceſſes attending theſe different cultures. They will afford ſubject for ſome future memoirs.

The ſoil in general, of Cochinchina, is excellent, and they cultivate it well. Their mountains in general are fallow, as population is not even ſufficiently conſiderable for the cultivation of all the plain grounds they have taken poſſeſſion of in Camboya: theſe mountains produce, however, the eagle or aloes-

wood, which is the moſt precious perfume in the world; the ſapan-wood, the ſame with that of Braſil; and the cinnamon, in ſmall quantities indeed, but much ſuperior in quality to that of Ceylon.—The Chineſe pay three or four times more for it than for that which the Dutch import from that iſland. They have ſeveral ſorts likewiſe of admirable wood for joyner and cabinet-work, particularly the roſe-wood; the tea-wood is excellent for building, and is preferred to all others in the conſtruction of the royal galleys, having every property that can be wiſhed for either for beauty or ſolidity. From their mountains alſo, and from the foreſts with which they are covered, they procure ivory, muſk, wax, iron, and gold in great abundance. Theſe moun-

mountains too are full of game, ſuch as deer, antelopes, wild goats, peacocks, pheaſants, &c. The chace is free to all, but dangerous from the number of tygers, elephants, rhinoceros, and other carnivorous and deſtructive animals, with which the foreſts abound.

The ſea, which waſhes their coaſts, as well as the rivers, are well ſupplied with excellent fiſh. Every one has the liberty of fiſhing; and in this the Cochin-chineſe take great delight. I have already obſerved, that they live chiefly on fiſh and rice.

Their domeſtic animals are, the horſe for the road, the buffalo for labour, and the cow, the hog, the goat, the gooſe, the duck, and hens of various kinds, for the table. Theſe

animals thrive extremely well, and are in great abundance. The king alone reſerves to himſelf the excluſive right of breeding elephants for the war; and this is a reſervation which no man envies him. He maintains generally four hundred of them; he could maintain four thouſand men at a much leſs expence. The Cochinchineſe have few good fruits; the pine-apple, and oranges of different kinds, are the beſt their country produces. They do not cultivate the vine, though it is one of the native productions of their lands. They are but indifferently provided with pulſe. In a word, their orchards and their gardens are very inconſiderable. They attach themſelves to the more eſſential branches of agriculture.

Although

Although this art is not yet arrived at that degree of perfection in Cochin-china, to which it might be carried, with the advantage of ſuch an excellent ſoil, yet the manners of the people being very favourable, it flouriſhes greatly. The Cochin-chineſe are gentle, hoſpitable, frugal, and induſtrious. There is not a beggar in the country; and robbery and murder abſolutely unknown. A ſtranger may wander over the kingdom, from one end to another, (the capital excepted) without meeting the ſlighteſt inſult: he will be every where received with a moſt eager curioſity, but, at the ſame time, with great benevolence. I have here remarked a cuſtom ſingular indeed, but expreſſive of their goodneſs of heart. A Cochin-chineſe traveller, who has

not money ſufficient to defray his expences at an inn, enters the firſt houſe of the town or village he arrives at: no body inquires his buſineſs; he ſpeaks to none, but waits in ſilence the hour of dinner; ſo ſoon as the rice is ſerved up, he modeſtly approaches, places himſelf at table along with the family, eats, drinks, and departs, without pronouncing a ſingle word, or any perſon's putting to him a ſingle queſtion: it was enough they ſaw he was a man, a brother in diſtreſs; they aſked no further information.

The ſix firſt kings, founders of this monarchy, governed the nation as a father governs his family; they eſtabliſhed the laws of nature alone; they themſelves paid the firſt obedience to them. Chiefs of an immenſe family

family of labourers, they gave the firſt example of labour; they honoured and encouraged agriculture, as the moſt uſeful and honourable employment of mankind. They required from their ſubjects only a ſmall annual free-gift, to defray the expence of their defenſive war againſt their Tonquineſe enemies.

This impoſition was regulated, by way of poll-tax, with the greateſt equity. Every man, able to labour the ground, paid in to the magiſtrate, on account of the prince, a ſmall ſum proportioned to the ſtrength of his conſtitution, and the vigour of his arm; and nothing more. It was under their reign, that this nation multiplied ſo ſurpriſingly, in conſequence of the plenty furniſhed by the culture of their fields. Whilſt they reign-

ed, the treaties entered into, on the banks of the river which ſeparates Tonquin from Cochin-china, between the chiefs of their family and thoſe who followed them in their retreat, were moſt religiouſly obſerved. It is to this reciprocal fidelity that Cochin-china owes its preſent flouriſhing ſtate, with regard to power, population, and agriculture. Their ſucceſſor, who now reigns, inherits their goodneſs of heart, but has the weakneſs to ſuffer himſelf to be governed by his ſlaves. Theſe have acquired the art of ſeparating the intereſt of the prince from that of his people. They have inſpired him with the thirſt after perſonal riches. The vaſt quantity of gold which they have dug from the mines, during this reign, has already proved detrimental to induſtry and agriculture. In

the

the palace it has been productive of luxury and corruption, its never-failing attendants.

This prince has been insensibly led to despise the simple habitations of his ancestors. He has built a superb palace, a league in circumference, surrounded by a wall of brick, on the model of that of Pekin. Sixteen hundred pieces of cannon, mounted around the palace, announce to the people the approaching loss of their liberties and rights.

He found a necessity too for a winter palace, a summer palace, and an autumn palace. The old taxes were by no means sufficient to defray these expences; they were augmented; and new impositions devised, which, being

ing no longer voluntary contributions, could not be levied but by force, and tyrannical oppreſſion. His courtiers, who found their intereſt in the corruption of their prince, have given him the title of *King of Heaven: Vous Tſoi*, hearing himſelf often ſo ſtiled, at length thought he might aſſume it — "Why," addreſſing himſelf one day to me, "don't you "come oftener to pay your court to "the *King of Heaven?*"

Theſe deſigning ſycophants, who guard every avenue to the royal ear, have had the addreſs to over-awe the ordinary adminiſtration of juſtice; and, taking advantage of exemption from puniſhment, have pillaged the labourers, and filled the provinces with oppreſſion and diſtreſs.

All

All along the high roads I have ſeen whole villages newly abandoned by their inhabitants, harraſſed by fruitleſs toil, and never ending exactions, and their fields, in conſequence, falling back to their firſt uncultivated ſtate.

In the midſt of all this growing diſorder, the prince, whoſe mind has been ſurprized by fawning flatterers, and who alone is ignorant of the villainy of thoſe around him, ſtill preſerves a reſpect for the manners of his anceſtors; he does not, indeed, like his forefathers, give an example of perſonal labour, but ſtill his deſire is to protect agriculture.

I have

I have ſeen him, at the commencement of the new year, preſide, with all the ſimplicity of his predeceſſors, at the general aſſembly of the nation, which is annually held on that day, in the open field, in order to renew the reciprocal oath for obſervation of the primordial contract, which eſtabliſhed him father of his people, at the ſame time that they inveſted him alone with the power, the nobleſt indeed of all, of making his people happy.

When he ſpeaks of his ſubjects, he calls them ſtill by no other name than that of his children. I have ſeen him too aſſiſt, like a ſimple individual, in the annual aſſembly of his family, according to the ancient

uſage

uſage of the nation; an aſſembly where the moſt aged always preſide, without regard to the dignities of thoſe of younger years. This, however, ſeemed to me only a formality venerable from cuſtom; for what is man, where the *King of Heaven* appears?

Corruption, it is true, has not yet infected the general body of the people; they ſtill preſerve their primitive manners: it is hitherto confined to the palace, and the capital: its ſource, however, is too elevated to prevent its poiſoned ſtreams from flowing to the plains. It is from the great that the corruption of a people ever derives its origin.

When it ſhall have infected every rank; when the foundations of agriculture,

culture, liberty and property, already attacked by the great, ſhall be overthrown; when the profeſſion of the farmer ſhall become the moſt contemptible, and the leaſt lucrative, what muſt be the fate of agriculture? Without a flouriſhing agriculture, what muſt be the fate of thoſe multitudes, foſtered under its wing?—What muſt be the fate of prince and people?—It will reſemble that of the nation who poſſeſſed the country before them; perhaps that of the ſavages, who yielded it to that nation: of them there are no remains, but the ruins of an immenſe wall, near the capital, which appears to have been part of a great city: it is of brick, and of a form very different from what is to be ſeen in the other countries of Aſia: no hiſtory, however,

no

no tradition has preſerved the memory of the builders.

Upon the whole I conclude, from the general corruption which threatens the manners of the Cochin-chineſe, that agriculture is on the decline, and that whatever efforts they may make to ſupport it, it has now paſſed its meridian, and muſt infallibly degenerate.

CHINA.

I now approach the period of my travels. Departing from the coaſts of Cochin-china, and directing my courſe towards the north-eaſt, I proceeded for China, which the Cochin-chineſe call, with great reſpect, *Nuſe d' ai Ming—the Kingdom of the Great Lumi-*

Luminary. After ſome days navigation, before there was any appearance of land, I perceived along the horizon a foreſt of maſts, and ſoon after an innumerable multitude of boats, which covered the ſurface of the water. Theſe were thouſands of fiſhermen, whoſe induſtry drew from the deeps ſubſiſtence for numbers. The land now began to riſe to my view; I advanced to the mouth of the river, ſtill amidſt crowds of fiſhers, throwing out their lines on every ſide. I entered the river of Canton; it is peopled like the land; its banks lined with ſhips at anchor; a prodigious number of ſmall craft are continually gliding along in every direction, ſome with ſails, others with oars, vaniſhing often ſuddenly from the ſight, as they enter the numberleſs

leſs canals, dug with amazing labour, acroſs extenſive plains, which they water and fertilize. Immenſe fields, covered with all the glory of the harveſt, with ſtately villages riſing to the eye on every ſide, adorn the remoter view, whilſt mountains, covered with verdure, cut into terraſſes, and ſhaped into amphitheatres, form the back ground of this noble landſcape.

I arrive at Canton, where new ſubjects for admiration ariſe; the noiſe, the motion, the crowd augments; the water, as well as land, being every where covered with multitudes. Aſtoniſhed at the amazing appearance, I inquire into the numbers of inhabitants of this city and ſuburbs; and, after comparing different accounts, find that they muſt amount

at

at leaſt to eight hundred thouſand ſouls. My ſurprize, however, is greatly increaſed, when I learn, that, to the northward of Canton, about five leagues up the river, is a village named *Facban*, which contains a million of inhabitants, and that every part of this great empire, extending about ſix hundred leagues from north to ſouth, and as much from eaſt to weſt, was peopled in the ſame proportion.

By what art can the earth produce ſubſiſtence for ſuch numbers? Do the Chineſe poſſeſs any ſecret art of multiplying the grain and proviſions neceſſary for the nouriſhment of mankind? To ſolve my doubts I traverſed the fields, I introduced myſelf among the labourers, who are in general eaſy, polite, and affable, with

ſome

ſome ſhare of learning, and knowledge of the world. I examine, and purſue them through all their operations, and obſerve that their ſecret conſiſts ſimply in manuring their fields judiciouſly, ploughing them to a conſiderable depth, ſowing them in the proper ſeaſon, turning to advantage every inch of ground which can produce the moſt inconſiderable crop, and preferring to every other ſpecies of culture that of grain, as by far the moſt important.

This ſyſtem of culture, the laſt article excepted, appears to be the ſame that is recommended in all our beſt authors, ancient and modern, who have wrote on this ſubject; our common labourers are acquainted with it; but how much muſt our European farmers be ſurprized, when they are in-

informed, that the Chineſe have no meadows, natural nor artificial, and have not the leaſt conception of fallowing, never allowing their lands the ſlighteſt repoſe.

The Chineſe labourer would conſider meadows, of every denomination, as lands in a ſtate of nature; they ſow their lands all with grain, and give the preference to ſuch grounds as we generally lay out in meadows, which, lying low, and being properly ſituated with reſpect to water, are conſequently by far the moſt fertile. They affirm, that a field ſown with grain, will yield as much ſtraw for the nouriſhment of cattle, as it would have produced of hay, beſides the additional advantage of the grain for the ſuſtenance of man, of which they can ſpare too, in plentiful

tiful ſeaſons, a ſmall portion for the animal creation.

Such is the ſyſtem adhered to from one extremity of their empire to the other, and confirmed by the experience of four thouſand years, amongſt a people, of all the nations in the world, the moſt attentive to their intereſt.

That which muſt render this plan of agriculture the more inconceivable to Europeans, is the idea of their never allowing their lands to lie one ſeaſon unlaboured. Thoſe who for ſome years have endeavoured, with ſuch public-ſpirited zeal, to re-animate amongſt us this neglected art, have conſidered, as the firſt and moſt important object, the multiplication of

of artificial meadows, to ſupply the defect of natural ones, for the fattening of cattle ; without once venturing to think of ſuppreſſing the mode of fallowing the grounds, however far they carried their ſyſtem of increaſing the number of artificial paſtures.

This ſyſtem, which appears the moſt plauſible of any they have projected, and is received with the greateſt partiality by our farmers, is, nevertheleſs, contradicted by the conſtant experience of the greateſt and the moſt ancient land-labouring nation in the world, who regard the practice of meadows, and fallowing grounds, as an abuſe, deſtructive of plenty and population, which are the only important objects of agriculture.

A Chineſe labourer could not but ſmile, if you informed him, that the earth has occaſion for repoſe at a certain fixed period of time : he certainly would ſay, that we deviated greatly from the point in view, could he read our treatiſes ancient and modern, our marvellous ſpeculations on agriculture : what would he ſay, if he ſaw our lands, part of them fallow, part of them employed in uſeleſs cultures, and the remainder wretchedly laboured ? What would he ſay, what muſt be his feelings, if, in travelling over our fields, he obſerved the extreme miſery and barbariſm of their wretched cultivators ?

The Chineſe lands, in general, are not ſuperior to ours : you ſee there,

as with us, ſome excellent grounds, others middling, the reſt bad; ſome ſoils ſtrong, others light; lands where clay, and lands where ſand, gravel, and flints every where predominate.

All theſe grounds, even in the northern provinces, yield annually two crops, and in thoſe towards the ſouth often five in two years, without one ſingle fallow ſeaſon, during the many thouſands of years that they have been converted to the purpoſes of agriculture.

The Chineſe uſe the ſame manures as we do, in order to reſtore to their grounds thoſe ſalts and juices, which an unintermitting production is perpetually conſuming. They are acquainted with marl; they employ alſo

ſo common ſalt, lime, aſhes, and all ſorts of animal dung, but above all that which we throw into our rivers: they make great uſe of urine, which is carefully preſerved in every houſe, and ſold to advantage: in a word, every thing produced by the earth is re-conveyed to it with the greateſt care, into whatever ſhape the operations of nature or art may have tranſformed it.

When their manures are at any time ſcarce, they ſupply the deficiency, by turning up the ground, with the ſpade, to a great depth, which brings up to the ſurface of the field a new ſoil, enriched with the juices of that which deſcends in its room.

Without meadows the Chineſe maintain a number of horſes, buffaloes, and other animals of every ſpecies neceſſary for labour, for ſuſtenance, and for manure. Theſe animals are fed, ſome with ſtraw, others with roots, beans, and grain of every kind. It is true, they have fewer horſes, and horned cattle, in proportion, than we have, yet it is not neceſſary that they ſhould have more.

The whole country is cut into canals, dug by the induſtry of the inhabitants, extending from river to river, which divide and water this vaſt empire, like a garden. Travelling, tranſporting of goods, almoſt every ſpecies of carriage is performed on theſe canals, with great eaſe, and ſmall

ſmall expence: they don't even uſe horſes to drag their boats; every thing is done by the ſail or the oar, which they manage with ſingular dexterity, even in going up the rivers. Where any kind of labour can be performed, at a moderate price by men, it is a maxim with them never to employ animals. In conſequence of this, the banks of their canals are cultivated almoſt to the water's edge; they loſe not an inch of ground: their public roads reſemble our foot-paths; their canals, however, are infinitely more uſeful than highways: they convey fertility every where, and furniſh the people great part of their ſubſiſtence in fiſh. — There is no compariſon between the weight which can be tranſported in a boat, and that which can be con-

veyed by any kind of land-carriage ; no proportion between the expence.

The Chineſe are ſtill leſs acquainted with the uſe, or rather the luxury of chariots, and equipages of every kind, which crowd the principal cities of Europe. The horſes neceſſary for theſe, aſſembled in thouſands in our capitals, conſume the produce of numberleſs acres of our beſt grounds, which, if cultivated with grain, would afford ſubſiſtence for multitudes, who are dying of hunger. The Chineſe wiſh rather to maintain men than horſes.

The emperor and chief magiſtrates are carried through the cities by men, with ſafety and with dignity ; their march is ſedate and majeſtic, it threatens not with danger thoſe who walk

walk on foot: they travel in a kind of galleys, ſafer, more commodious, equally magnificent, and leſs expenſive than our land equipages.

I have before obſerved, that the Chineſe loſe not an inch of ground. They are very far, therefore, from allotting immenſe parks, of the fineſt ground, for the maintenance alone of deer, in contempt of the human race. The emperors, even thoſe of the Tartar line, have never hitherto dreamed of forming theſe parks; ſtill leſs the grandees, that is, the magiſtrates and the learned: ſuch an idea could never find place in the mind of a Chineſe. Even their country houſes, and boxes of pleaſure, preſent nothing to the eye all around, but uſeful cultures, agreeably diverſified,

That which conſtitutes their principal beauty, is their delightful ſituation, judiciouſly improved, where, in the diſpoſition of the various parts which form the whole, there every where reigns a happy imitation of that beautiful diſorder of nature, from whence art has borrowed all her charms.

The moſt rocky hills, which, in France, and other places of Europe, they turn into vineyards, or totally neglect, are there compelled, by dint of induſtry, to produce grain. The Chineſe are acquainted, indeed, with the vine, which here and there they plant in arbours; but they conſider it as a luxury, and the wine it produces as an unneceſſary ſuperfluity: they would imagine it a ſin againſt humanity, to endeavour to procure, by

by cultivation, an agreeable liquor, whilſt, from the want of that grain which this vineyard might have produced, ſome individual perhaps might be in danger of periſhing of hunger.

The ſteepeſt mountains, even, are rendered acceſſible: at Canton, and from one extremity of the empire to another, you obſerve mountains cut into terraſſes, repreſenting, at a diſtance, immenſe pyramids divided into different ſtages, which ſeem to rear their heads to heaven. Every one of theſe terraſſes yields annually a crop of ſome kind of grain, even of rice; and you cannot with-hold your admiration, when you behold the water of the river, the canal, or the fountain, which glides by the foot of the mountain, raiſed from terraſs to terraſs, even to the ſummit, by

means of a ſimple portable machine, which two men with eaſe tranſport and put in motion.

The ſea itſelf, which ſeems to threaten the ſolid globe it ſurrounds, has been compelled, by induſtry and labour, to yield part of its dominions to the Chineſe cultivator.

The two fineſt provinces of the empire, Nanking and Tché-kiang, formerly covered with water, have been united to the continent ſome thouſands of years ago, with an art infinitely ſuperior to that which is ſo much admired in the modern works of Holland.

The Chineſe had to ſtruggle with a ſea, whoſe natural flux from eaſt to

to weſt urges it continually towards the coaſts of theſe two provinces; whilſt the Dutch have had nothing to oppoſe but a ſea, which, by the ſame natural motion, always avoids their weſtern ſhores.

The Chineſe nation is capable of the moſt ſtupendous works; in point of labour I never obſerved their equals in the world. Every day in the year is a working day, except the firſt, deſtined for paying reciprocal viſits, and the laſt, which is conſecrated to the ceremonial duties they pay to their anceſtors.

An idle man would be treated with the moſt ſovereign contempt, and regarded as a paralytic member, a load to the body of which he made a part; the government would

in

in no manner permit it. How oppoſite from the ideas of other Aſiatics, where none are admitted to any degree of eſtimation, but thoſe who, from their ſituation in life, have nothing to do! — An ancient emperor of China, in a public inſtruction, exhorting the people to labour, obſerved, that if in one corner of the empire there was one man who did nothing, there muſt, in ſome other quarter, be another who ſuffers on that account, deprived of the neceſſaries of life. This wiſe maxim is fixed in the breaſt of every Chineſe; and, with this people ſo open to reaſon, he who pronounces a wiſe maxim pronounces a law.

Behold, gentlemen, a ſlight ſketch of the general picture of Chineſe agriculture, with the peculiar genius of that

that people for this art. The limits of my diſcourſe will not permit me at preſent to enter into a detail of the different cultures I have ſeen in this country: I ſhall only obſerve, that they are ſuch as abundantly ſupply all the wants, and conveniencies of the moſt populous nation in the world, and furniſh with their ſuperfluity, an important article for foreign commerce.

From theſe obſervations it is obvious, that agriculture flouriſhes in China more than in any other country in the world: yet it is not to any proceſs peculiar to their labour, it is not to the form of their plough, or their method of ſowing, that this happy ſtate, and the plenty conſequent on it, is to be attributed; it muſt chiefly be derived from their mode

mode of government, the immoveable foundations of which have been laid deep, by the hand of reaſon alone, coeval almoſt with the beginning of time; and from their laws, dictated by nature to the firſt of the human race, and ſacredly preſerved from generation to generation, engraved in the united hearts of a great people, not in obſcure codes, deviſed by chicanery and deceit.—In a word, China owes the proſperity of her agriculture to the ſimplicity of her manners, and to her laws, which are the laws of nature and reaſon.

This empire was founded by labourers, in thoſe happy times when the laws of the great Creator were ſtill held in remembrance, and the culture of the earth conſidered as the nobleſt of all employments, the moſt worthy

worthy of mankind, and the general occupation of all. From *Fou-hi* (who was the firſt chief of this nation, ſome hundreds of years after the deluge, if we follow the verſion of the Septuagint, and in this quality preſided over agriculture) all the emperors, without exception, even to this day, glory in being the firſt labourers of their empire.

The Chineſe hiſtory has careſully preſerved an anecdote of generoſity in two of the ancient emperors, who, not perceiving among their children any one worthy to mount a throne, which virtue alone ought to inherit, named, as their ſucceſſors, two ſimple labourers. Theſe labourers, according to the Chineſe annals, advanced the happineſs of mankind, during very long reigns; their memory is

ſtill

ſtill held in the higheſt veneration. It is unneceſſary to obſerve how much examples, ſuch as theſe, honour and animate agriculture.

The Chineſe nation has ever been governed like a family, of which the emperor is father: his ſubjects are his children, without any other inequality but that which is eſtabliſhed by talents, and by merits. Thoſe puerile diſtinctions of *nobleſſe*, and *plebeians*, *men of family*, and *men of mean birth*, are no where to be found but in the jargon of new people, ſtill barbarous, who, having forgot the common origin of all men, inſult without reflection, and debaſe the whole human race; whilſt that nation whoſe government is ancient, dating its commencement with the

firſt

firſt ages of the world, are ſenſible that all men are born equal, all brothers, all noble. Their language has not even hitherto invented a term for expreſſing this pretended diſtinction of birth. The Chineſe, who have preſerved their annals from the remoteſt times, and who are all equally the children of the emperor, have never ſo much as ſuſpected an inequality of origin amongſt us.

From this principle, that the emperor is father, and the people his children, ſpring all the duties of ſociety, all the duties of morality, every virtue of humanity, the union of every wiſh for the common good of the family, conſequently an attachment to labour, and above all to agriculture.

This

This art is honoured, protected, and practiſed by the emperor, and the great magiſtrates, who generally are the ſons of plain labouring men, whom merit has raiſed to the firſt dignities of the empire; and, in a word, by the whole nation, who have the good ſenſe to honour an art the moſt uſeful to mankind; in preference to others more frivolous, and leſs important.

CEREMONY OF OPENING THE GROUNDS.

On the fifteenth day of the firſt moon, in every year, which generally correſponds to the beginning of March, the emperor in perſon performs the ceremony of opening the grounds. This prince, in great pomp, pro-

proceeds to the field appointed for the ceremony: the princes of the imperial family, the presidents of the five great tribunals, and an infinite number of mandarins accompany him. Two sides of the field are occupied by the emperor's officers, and guards; the third is allotted for all the labourers of the province, who repair thither to behold their art honoured and practised by the head of their empire; the fourth is reserved for the mandarins.

The emperor enters the field alone, prostrates himself, and nine times strikes his head against the ground, in adoration of *Tien*, the God of heaven; he pronounces, with a loud voice, a prayer appointed by the tribunal of rites, invoking the blessing of the almighty sovereign on his labour, and

on

on the labour of his people, who form his family; he then, in quality of ſovereign pontiff of the empire, ſacrifices a bullock, which he offers up to heaven, as the ſource of every bleſſing: whilſt they cut the victim in pieces, and place them on the altar, they bring to the emperor a plough, in which are yoked a pair of bullocks, magnificently adorned. The emperor then, laying aſide his royal robes, takes hold of the handle of the plough, and turns up ſeveral furrows the whole length of the field; then, with a complaiſant air, having delivered the plough to the mandarins, they ſucceſſively follow his example, emulating one another in performing this honourable labour with the greateſt dexterity. The ceremony concludes with the diſtribution of money, and pieces of ſtuff, among the

the labourers there preſent; the moſt active of whom finiſh the remaining labour, in preſence of the emperor, with great agility and addreſs.

Some time after, when they have ſufficiently laboured and manured their grounds, the emperor repairs again, in proceſſion, and begins the ſowing of the fields, always accompanied with ceremony, and attended by the labourers of the province.

The ſame ceremonies are performed, on the ſame days in all the provinces of the empire, by the viceroys, aſſiſted by all the magiſtrates of their departments, in preſence of a great number of the labourers of their reſpective provinces. I have ſeen this opening of the grounds at Canton, and never remember to have beheld

any

any of the ceremonies, invented by men, with half the pleaſure and ſatiſfaction with which I obſerved this.

THE ENCOURAGEMENTS OF AGRICULTURE.

The Chineſe agriculture has, at the ſame time, other encouragements. Every year the viceroys of the provinces ſend to court the names of ſuch labourers as have chiefly diſtinguiſhed themſelves in their employments, either by cultivating grounds till then conſidered as barren, or, by a ſuperior culture, improving the production of ſuch lands as formerly had bore grain. Theſe names are preſented to the emperor, who confers on them honorary titles, to diſtinguiſh them above their fellow-labourers. If any man has made an

impor-

important diſcovery, which may influence the improvement of agriculture, or ſhould he, in any manner, deſerve more diſtinguiſhed marks of regard than the reſt, the emperor invites him to Pekin, defraying his journey, with dignity, at the expence of the empire; he receives him into his palace, interrogates him with regard to his abilities, his age, the number of his children, the extent and quality of his lands; then diſmiſſes him to his plough, diſtinguiſhed by honourable titles, and loaded with benefits and favours.

Who is happieſt, gentlemen, the prince who conducts himſelf in this manner, or the nation who is thus governed? Amongſt a people where all are equal, where every one aſpires after

after diſtinctions, ſuch encouragements cannot fail to inſpire a love for labour, and an emulation for the cultivation of the ground.

ATTENTION OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

The whole attention, in general, of the Chineſe government, is directed towards agriculture. The principal object of the father of a family, ought to be the ſubſiſtence of his children. The ſtate of the fields, in conſequence forms the great object of the toils, the cares, and the ſolicitudes of the magiſtrates. It may eaſily be conceived, that, with ſuch diſpoſitions, the government has not neglected to ſecure to the labourers that liberty, property, and indulgence

gence which are the great ſprings for the improvement of agriculture.

The Chineſe enjoy, undiſturbed, their private poſſeſſions, as well as thoſe which, being by their nature indiviſible, belong to all, ſuch as the ſea, the rivers, the canals, the fiſh which they contain, and the beaſts of the foreſt: navigation, fiſhing, and the chace are free to every one; and he who buys a field, or receives it by inheritance from his anceſtors, is of courſe the ſole lord and maſter.

The lands are free as the people; no feudal ſervices, and no fines of alienation; none of thoſe men intereſted in the misfortunes of the public; none of thoſe farmers who never amaſs more exorbitant fortunes, than when an unfavourable ſeaſon has ruin-

ed the country, and reduced the unhappy labourer to periſh for want, after having toiled the year round for the ſuſtenance of his fellow ſubjects; none of that deſtructive profeſſion, hatched in the delirium of the feudal ſyſtem, under whoſe auſpices ariſe millions of proceſſes, which drag the labourer from his plough into the obſcure and dangerous mazes of chicane, and thereby rob him while defending his rights, of that time which would have been importantly employed in the general ſervice of mankind.

THE IMPOSTS ESTABLISHED IN CHINA INVARIABLE.

In China there is no other lord, no other ſuperior, who has power to levy taxes, but the common father of the family, the emperor. The bonzes

zes (prieſts of the ſect of Fo-hi) accuſtomed to receive alms from a charitable people, would be very indifferently received, ſhould they pretend that this alms is a right which heaven has beſtowed upon them.

THE IMPOST CALLED THE TENTH.

This impoſt, which is not exactly the tenth part of the produce, is regulated according to the nature of the grounds: in bad ſoils it is perhaps only the thirtieth part, and ſo in proportion. This impoſt, however, of the tenth part of the produce of the earth, which belongs to the emperor, is the only tax on the lands, the only tribute known in China ſince the origin of the monarchy; and ſuch is the happy reſpect which the Chineſe have for their ancient

cuſtoms, that an emperor of China would never entertain the moſt diſtant thought of augmenting it, nor his ſubjects the leaſt apprehenſion of ſuch augmentation. The people pay it, in kind, not to avaricious farmers-generals, but to upright magiſtrates, their proper and natural governors. The amount of this tribute, though apparently trifling, muſt be immenſe, when we conſider that it is levied on every foot of ground of the moſt extenſive and beſt cultivated empire in the world. This tax is paid with the greateſt fidelity, as they know the purpoſes to which it is applied. They know, that part of it is laid up in immenſe magazines, diſtributed over every province of the empire, and allotted for the maintenance of the magiſtrates and

ſol-

ſoldiery: they know, that, in the event of ſcarcity, theſe magazines are open to all, and the wants of the people ſupplied with part of that which was received from them in times of abundance: they know too, that the remainder of this impoſt is ſold in the public markets, and the produce of it faithfully carried to the treaſury of the empire, the cuſtody of which is intruſted to the reſpectable tribunal of *Ho-pou*, from whence it never is iſſued but to ſupply the general wants of the family.

COM-

COMPARISON OF THE AGRICULTURE OF AFRICA AND ASIA WITH THAT OF CHINA.

Recollect, gentlemen, what I have ſaid of the laws, the manners, and the cuſtoms of the different nations of Africa and Aſia, the ſtate of whoſe agriculture I have examined: compare nation with nation, and then judge, if the unfortunate Malabar, without property, ſubjected to the tyrannical government of the Moguls; judge if a race of ſlaves, under the iron ſcepter of the deſpote of Siam; judge if the Malais, ever turbulent, and fettered by their feudal laws; judge, I ſay, if theſe nations, though poſſeſſing the fineſt grounds in the world, can poſſibly ever

ever make agriculture to flouriſh like the Chineſe, governed as a family, and ſubjected to the laws of reaſon alone.—I ſhall again repeat, therefore, with confidence, that, in every country in the world, the fate of agriculture depends ſolely on the laws there eſtabliſhed, on the manners of the people, and even on the prejudices which derive their origin from thoſe laws.

What induſtry hath the inhabitants of the earth diſplayed, from one extremity of the globe to the other, in rendering themſelves unhappy! Created to live in ſociety, to cultivate the earth, and enjoy from their labour the infinite bleſſings of the great Creator, they had only to liſten to the voice of nature, who would have taught them happineſs below: in place of

of which, they have ſtrained their faculties in the invention of barbarous inſtitutions, and perplexing legiſlations, which being ill adapted to the feelings of mankind, and diſcordant with that law which is engraved in every man's breaſt, their eſtabliſhment could only be effected by force, deluging the world with blood; and which, once eſtabliſhed, have continued to deſolate the earth, checking population, by the oppreſſion of agriculture.

THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN EUROPE.

What an object for an attentive traveller, to obſerve the ſtate of agriculture amongſt the various people who divide the globe! In Europe behold it at preſent flouriſhing, in a country

country which, during many preceding ages was reduced to the neceſſity of begging ſubſiſtence amongſt the neighbouring nations, who poſſeſſed a happier climate, and a greater extent of territory. During thoſe ages of barbariſm, their loſs of liberty and right of property brought along with them the ruin of cultivation; nor has ſhe recovered thoſe natural rights of mankind, and re-eſtabliſhed the foundations of drooping agriculture, but through ſeas of blood, and outrages ſhocking to humanity.

IN AFRICA.

Africa, in general, whoſe regions, known to the ancients, were conſidered as the granaries of the world, now preſent nothing to the view but grounds

grounds either intirely neglected, or wretchedly cultivated by the labour of ſlaves.

IN AMERICA.

South-America, covered with marſhes, brambles, and woods, beholds her extenſive tracks hardened even by the ſweat of her labourers in chains. The northern regions of that quarter of the world are inhabited by inconſiderable tribes of ſavages, miſerable, and without culture; yet free, and, in conſequence, leſs wretched perhaps than thoſe nations who pretend to be civilized; but who, being farther removed from the laws of nature, by the privation of thoſe rights which ſhe beſtows, make ineffectual efforts to procure that happineſs,

pineſs, which a good agriculture alone can produce.

IN ASIA.

The vaſt continent of Aſia offers to your conſideration, in one quarter, an immenſe uncultivated region, peopled by a race of banditti, more intent on plunder than the cultivation of their grounds; in another, a great empire, formerly flouriſhing, and excellently laboured, now inhabited by the poor remains of a wretched people, periſhing with hunger from the neglect of agriculture, and ſhedding their blood, not for liberty but for a change of tyrants. This charming fertile quarter of the world (the cradle of the human race) now beholds her lands in ſlavery, her labourers in chains, ſubjected either

to

to the blind deſpotiſm of unfeeling tyrants, or the deſtructive yoke of the feudal ſyſtem.

But turn your eyes to the eaſtern extremity of the Aſiatic continent, inhabited by the Chineſe, and there you will conceive a raviſhing idea of the happineſs the world might enjoy, where the laws of this empire the model of thoſe of other countries. This great nation unites under the ſhade of agriculture, founded on liberty and reaſon, all the advantages poſſeſſed by whatever nation, civilized or ſavage. The bleſſing pronounced on man, at the moment of his creation, ſeems not to have had its full effect, but in favour of this people, who have multiplied as the ſands on the ſhore.

Princes,

Princes, who rule over nations! arbiters of their fate! view well this perſpective; it is worthy your attention. Would you wiſh abundance to flouriſh in your dominions, would you favour population, and make your people happy; behold thoſe innumerable multitudes which overſpread the territories of China, who leave not a ſhred of ground uncultivated; it is liberty, it is their undiſturbed right of property that has eſtabliſhed a cultivation ſo flouriſhing, under the auſpices of which this people have increaſed as the grains which cover their fields.

Does the glory of being the moſt powerful, the richeſt, and the happieſt of ſovereigns touch your ambition, turn your eyes towards Pekin,

and

and behold the moſt powerful of mortal beings ſeated on the throne of reaſon :—he does not command, he inſtructs ;—his words are not decrees, they are the maxims of juſtice and wiſdom ;—his people obey him, becauſe his orders are dictated by equity alone.

He is the moſt powerful of men, reigning over the hearts of the moſt numerous ſociety in the world, who conſtitute his family. — He is the richeſt of ſovereigns, drawing from an extent of territory ſix hundred leagues ſquare, cultivated even to the ſummits of the mountains, the tenth of thoſe abundant harveſts it inceſſantly produces : this he conſiders as the wealth of his children, and he huſbands it with care.—To ſum up all, he is the happieſt of monarchs,

taſting

taſting every day the inexpreſſible pleaſure of giving happineſs to millions, and alone enjoying, undivided, that ſatisfaction which his ſubjects ſhare—his children! all to him equally dear; all living like brothers, in freedom and abundance, under his protection.

He is called the ſon of *Tien*, as the true and moſt perfect image of heaven, whoſe benevolence he imitates; and his grateful people adore him as a God, becauſe his conduct is worthy of a Man.

FINIS.